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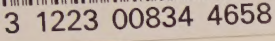
WHITLEY

ARTISTS AND THEIR FRIENDS IN
ENGLAND 1700-1799



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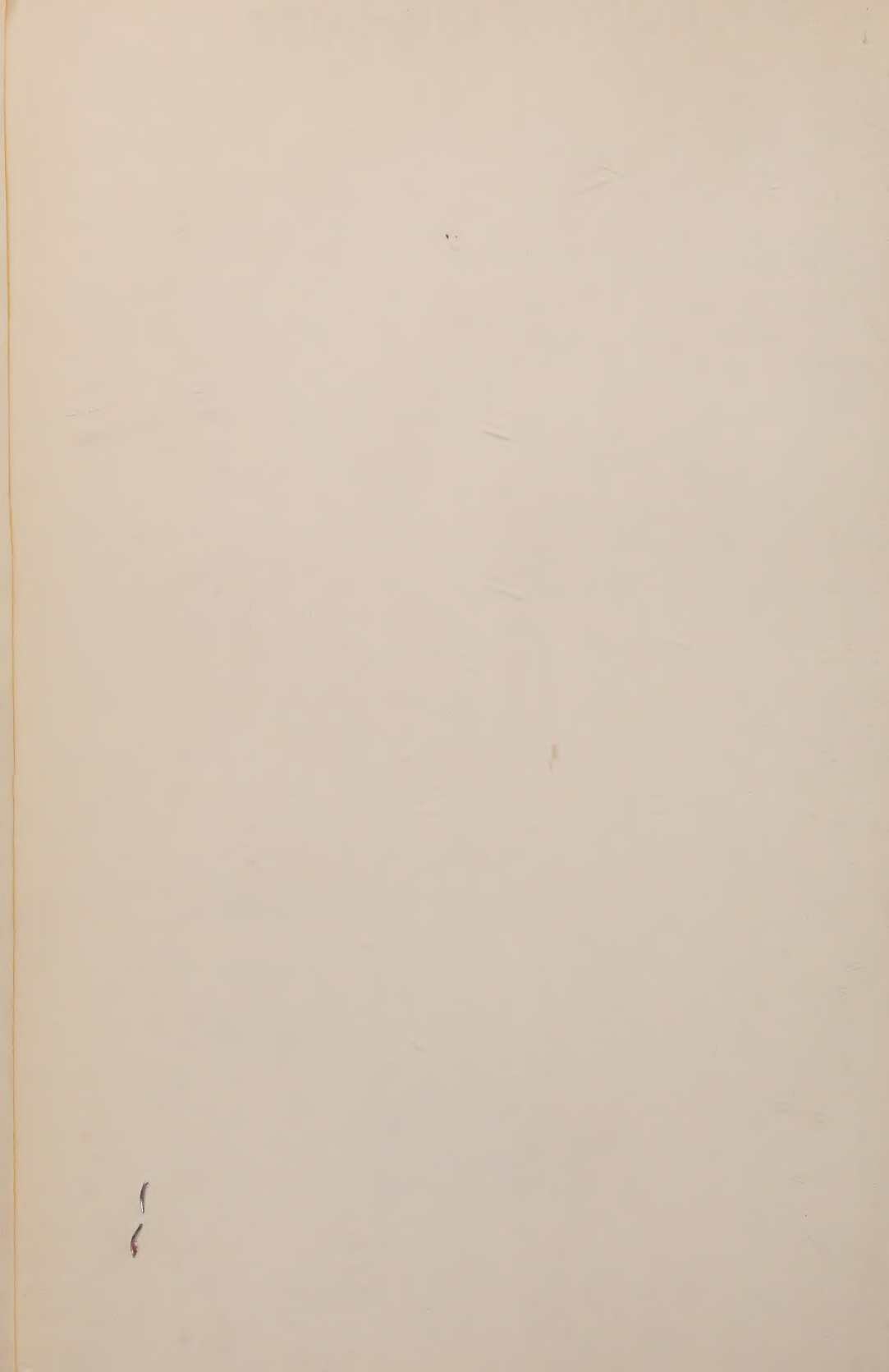
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ARTISTS & THEIR FRIENDS
IN ENGLAND—1700-1799

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Cover of a Picture Sale Catalogue, 1725

ARTISTS

AND THEIR FRIENDS
IN ENGLAND

1700-1799

by

WILLIAM T. WHITLEY

Author of "Thomas Gainsborough"



VOLUME ONE

LONDON & BOSTON
THE MEDICI SOCIETY

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TO MY WIFE

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PREFACE

IN these volumes I have attempted to throw fresh light upon the history and surroundings of artists working in England from the beginning of the eighteenth century and the foundation of Sir Godfrey Kneller's Academy, to the admission of Turner to the Royal Academy on the last evening of 1799. With the establishment of Kneller's Academy, in a once stately but then ruinous house in Great Queen Street, began the movement that led to the foundation of the Royal Academy and the modern system of art exhibitions.

It was essential to my plan to trace the progress of the early art schools and the societies of artists that arose from them, but I have not attempted to chronicle completely the proceedings of those institutions. Their story from 1711 to 1799, so far as I tell it, is used largely to link together the new information of which the volumes are principally composed—information that includes letters, anecdotes, contemporary criticisms, facts and figures; and records of all kinds concerning eighteenth-century artists, their friends and environment, in the period specified.

By new information I mean that which cannot be found in the existing biographies of painters and sculptors, and other books dealing with the art of the time. With some of my material students of eighteenth-century art history will probably be acquainted, but much of it, I hope, will be new even to them. It has been collected in the course of many years from innumerable sources: including the records of the Royal Academy, the Society of Arts, the old Incorporated and Free Societies of Artists, the note-books of George Vertue, and letters and manuscripts at the British Museum and the Record Office.

Much has been gathered from an exhaustive search of the newspapers of the period, chiefly from their criticisms of the Academy and other exhibitions, and from the occasional correspondence in their columns. The opinion of the critics on the work of the great painters of their day is often amusing in its freedom and outspokenness, and their remarks are occasionally useful in identifying portraits described in the catalogues, according to eighteenth-century custom, only as representing a lady or a gentleman. From the newspapers I have been able to add many identifications to the well-known lists compiled by the late Algernon Graves. They will be found in the Appendix,

PREFACE

together with further identifications and comments upon other exhibited pictures taken from unpublished notes by Horace Walpole.

The account of the various artists' colourmen in Chapter XIX is the first that has been published of the men who supplied the eighteenth-century painters with their materials. The same subject is touched upon in Chapter IV, in some curious letters from John Smibert, the first artist of any importance who settled in America. They were written from Boston in 1745 and 1749 to his London agent, Arthur Pond, asking for the dispatch of colours, brushes, canvases and other necessities, of which lists, and in some cases prices, are given.

In my earlier chapters Kneller, Hogarth, Highmore, Ramsay, Canaletto and Roubiliac figure prominently; and a new and favourable view is given of that ardent collector of pictures, and much-abused man, Frederick, Prince of Wales, father of George the Third. In these chapters, too, will be found accounts of the proceedings of the Society of Virtuosi of St. Luke, founded by Vandyck when in England, and of the meetings and dinners at the Turk's Head tavern and the Foundling Hospital which led to the commencement of exhibitions of contemporary works of art. The story of these first exhibitions is given more completely than before from information gathered from the papers of the old societies of artists and from the newspapers of the time. From these exhibitions developed those of the Royal Academy, which are described from 1769 to 1799, with particulars of the Hanging Committees and many anecdotes concerning the pictures and their arrangements. Accounts are given from time to time of the elections of Academicians and Associates, with figures of the voting in more important cases; and occasional notes from the Minutes concerning the Academy charities and other matters of interest.

Among the prominent features of the second volume are biographical notes on Richard Wilson, R.A.; with a letter from him, an accurate description of his palette, and technical information about his methods; a lengthy and remarkable criticism of Copley's *Death of Lord Chatham*, in which the correctness of the representation of the famous scene in the House of Lords is challenged; the story of Benjamin West's acquisition of his Titian, which caused a sensation in 1785; and that of the now forgotten Polygraphic Society and its reproductions of pictures

PREFACE

in colour. The angry correspondence between Sir Joshua Reynolds and Valentine Green about the engraving of the portrait of Mrs. Siddons, and between Hoppner and William Peters, R.A., concerning Hoppner's criticisms of pictures published in the *Morning Post*, will also be found in the second volume.

Both volumes contain new information about the American painters who settled in England in the eighteenth century. West and Copley are, of course, the subjects of frequent comments on themselves or their pictures between 1765 and the end of the century. Others who appear from time to time in the narrative are Gilbert Stuart, who after making a reputation in England returned to his native country in 1793; Mather Brown; John Greenwood of Boston; Henry Bembidge, who painted for Boswell the portrait of Paoli the Corsican patriot; and that remarkable woman, Patience Wright, the wax modeller and political agent, whose daughter married John Hoppner, R.A.

Many anecdotes new to modern times are told of the friends of the artists of the period, including George the Third, Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson, Boswell, Young of *Night Thoughts*, Dr. Mead, Samuel Richardson, Garrick, Mrs. Siddons, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and James Christie the auctioneer.

The Appendix includes a number of articles in addition to the list of identified portraits, already mentioned. The most important is composed of extracts from about forty letters written in his youth by James Northcote, R.A., principally while he was the pupil of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and living in his house in Leicester Fields. They give a more intimate description than any yet published of the domestic life and surroundings of the great painter. The remaining articles deal, among other things, with the art critics of the eighteenth century, the records of the Society of Virtuosi of St. Luke; and with incidents in the careers of Alexander and John Robert Cozens, Zoffany, the brothers Dance, De Loutherbourg, Henry Walton, Richard Brompton, Lawrence, Sir George Beaumont, Gosset the wax modeller, Wright of Derby, and George Stubbs.

With the exception of the late Sir Frederick Eaton, Secretary to the Royal Academy, I am the first modern writer who has been allowed to search and quote from the records of that institution, and I take this opportunity of thanking the President and Council for granting me this exceptional privilege. I have also to thank the Duke of Richmond, the Earl of Rosebery, the Earl of

PREFACE

Malmesbury, the Hon. Mrs. Hugh Wyndham, Mr. Rupert Colomb, Mr. W. R. M. Lamb, Secretary to the Royal Academy, Mr. Ernest Wright, Librarian to the Royal Academy, Mr. H. Avray Tipping, Mr. A. Clark Kennedy, Mr. J. Oxley Parker, the Governors of the Foundling Hospital, Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, and Messrs. Duveen Brothers, for information, assistance, or permission to reproduce pictures.

I wish, moreover, particularly to thank Miss L. M. Redfern, to whom I am greatly indebted for her valuable help in the research work for the new information contained in the book.

W. T. W.

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CHAPTER ONE

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IN the history of our country the reign of Anne stands out as a brilliant period of military and literary achievement. It witnessed in war the capture of Gibraltar, and those campaigns of Marlborough in which that extraordinary soldier defeated the armies of the greatest military power of the world; and it has been described as the Augustan age of English writers, when Swift, Pope, Defoe, and a host of others made the period illustrious. The mention of the reign of Anne brings these deeds and names at once to our minds, but how many, other than students of the history of art, can recall without effort the work of any painters of her time except Kneller, Richardson and Thornhill? When Anne ascended the throne in 1702 there were no English painters or sculptors worthy of particular consideration, for the arts in this country had sunk almost to their lowest ebb and there were as yet no indications of that great eighteenth-century revival that was to bring forth Hogarth, Reynolds and Gainsborough. We had lost touch with the traditions of Holbein, Vandyck, and other foreign masters whose practice in this country had influenced our school in earlier times; and Cornelius Johnson, William Dobson, Samuel Cooper and the rest of the seventeenth-century painters of eminence had passed away and left no worthy successors.

Of the foreign painters working in England at the time of Anne's accession the most prominent was Sir Godfrey Kneller, a German, who in his youth had been the pupil of Rembrandt, of whose methods he had no high opinion. According to Bucke-

ridge, who claimed to have heard the story of Kneller's life from his own lips, Rembrandt's scholar was dissatisfied with his master's style "in which true proportion and exact design were wanting" and soon left him with the intention of proceeding to Rome to finish his studies.

The German artist had some talent but more vanity, and the incessant adulation bestowed upon his work in England made him believe that his most superficial efforts were worthy to rank with the achievements of the great masters. Kneller's supremacy at the beginning of the eighteenth century was unquestioned. He had enormous influence among the painters of the period, and a host of imitators, who, seeing nature only through his eyes, were led astray by him. "This was the time," says the eighteenth-century artist and writer, Thomas Bardwell, "when our painters exposed their understanding by neglecting the charming style of Vandyck to follow Kneller."

The reputation of Kneller survived long after his death, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, when speaking at a later time of the taste prevailing in the days of his youth, declared that if anyone had then ventured to compare Vandyck with the great Sir Godfrey he would have been laughed at as an idiot. Some idea of the extent of the patronage he enjoyed and of the way in which his innumerable commissions were executed is given in an article in an eighteenth-century newspaper, published long after his death but while men were still living who remembered the German painter and his methods.

Sir Joshua was now the favourite of the public, and the writer of the article, after noting the improvement in the national taste, recalled the period when "Nature seemed to have been forgotten and Kneller was the fashion." He describes him as a man whose pride in his art was wholly subordinate to his love for money. The death of Lely had left him without a serious rival, every one came to him to be painted, and as it was impossible to carry out all the commissions single-handed he gradually built up a picture-manufactory, "established upon as regular principles as the fabricating of carpets at Kidderminster."

"In his hands painting became a trade and was conducted upon precisely the same principles. To execute as many pictures as he could get orders for in the shortest space of time was his only object, and to facilitate their progress he appointed each assistant to his peculiar province. When he

had finished the face and sketched in the outlines of the shoulders, etc., the picture was given to the artist who excelled in painting a hat, and when the hat was fixed upon the head or tucked under the arm the canvas was consigned to the painter of the periwig, who, having given eternal buckle to the flowing white curls which hung in ample ringlets on each shoulder, turned it over to another who gave the glossy blue velvet coat that a further industrious artisan ornamented with curious worked buttons, each of them wrought up with all the laborious accuracy of the German school. One excelled in the delineation of the laced handkerchief and point ruffles, while the broad gold lace which decorated the scarlet waistcoat was the forte of another.

"His women were treated in precisely the same manner; one German genius had the adjustment of the laced tucker, another gave the embroidered stomacher. To one he committed the care of the graceful robe which was so elegantly disposed that the wearer could not walk across the room without dropping it off, while another was to paint the red and green parrot which perched upon Madame's left hand; and the lamb which she was stroking with the other hand was the province of the *pastoral* painter."

This description of Kneller's methods when his popularity had reached its height may be overcoloured, but a letter written at this period by Pope to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu suggests that the artist saw little even of his most important sitters, and that their portraits, after the first sketch of the head in chalk, were executed without further sittings. Lady Mary—the adored of Pope—was anxious to be painted by Kneller, and knowing that he and the poet were intimate, asked her admirer to make the necessary arrangements. He hastened to comply, and he says in his letter:—

"Upon conferring with Kneller I find he thinks it absolutely necessary to draw the face first, which he says can never be set right on the figure if the drapery and posture be finished before. To give you as little trouble as possible he proposes to draw your face with crayons and finish it up at your own house in a morning; from whence he will transfer it to the canvas, so that you need not go to sit at his house. This, it must be observed, is a manner in which they seldom draw any but crowned heads; and I observe it with secret pride and

pleasure. Be so kind as to tell me if he should do this to-morrow at twelve."

Kneller was fortunate in possessing natural qualities valuable to a portrait painter: "... a proper state of health continually, active and vigorous, a good memory, a pleasant conversation finely entertaining when a-painting, that it is always observed that his performance is with so much facility—no seeming confinement in sitting (as is usual) that people go away with more sprightliness than they came."

It is George Vertue who tells us this, in one of his many notes left unused by Horace Walpole when he compiled from Vertue's manuscripts his *Anecdotes of Painting in England*. The engraver-antiquary was acquainted not only with Kneller but with certain of his small army of assistant painters, of whom the names of several have come down to us; and he says of the chief of them, John Peeters, an Antwerp man, that he was "very excellent and useful to Sir Godfrey; a proper lusty man of free, open temper, a lover of good company and his bottle. To this gentleman I was highly obliged for instruction in drawing in my juvenile studies, as well as for his good and friendly advice in the works of reputation which I published at my setting forth in the world." Peeters, who survived Kneller and died in 1727, was known in the art world of London as "the Doctor" because of his amazing skill in the repairing and retouching of pictures and drawings. Vertue says he could add masterly touches to poor, ancient drawings that gave them a fictitious air of quality which frequently deceived the connoisseurs of the time.

Kneller's social position in London in the reign of Anne was on a par with that of Vandyck in the time of Charles the First, but he was a more prudent man than the Flemish painter. Flattered by such writers as Addison and Pope, and earning a princely income, he lived in semi-state with liveried servants, a large town house in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and a country seat at Whitton near Hounslow. His seat at Whitton, an imposing building, is now the training school for the bandsmen of the British army. Between his town and country houses the painter travelled in his six-horsed coach, and on one of these journeys suffered from the attentions of the highwaymen, as Gainsborough did on the same western road nearly sixty years afterwards. Sir Godfrey, who was robbed in October, 1718, lost twenty guineas and his watch.

THE FIRST ACADEMY OF ART

Although the influence and example of the German artist were prejudicial to the advancement of art in this country, credit should be given to Kneller for his consistent support of the first attempt to found a school in London in which drawing and painting from the life could be practised. English painters of the early eighteenth century were severely handicapped by the absence of such a school, or indeed of any places where they could even meet together, except the artists' clubs. Of these two at least were in existence, the Rose and Crown, to which George Vertue was admitted as early as 1704, and the older and more important Society of Virtuosi of St. Luke, the history of which I shall give in a later chapter. The meetings of these clubs offered no opportunities for study. They were held in taverns and were always of a more or less convivial nature.

A plan for an Academy of Art was sketched by John Evelyn as early as 1662, but it was not until 1711 that the first school for working from the life was organized. This school contained the seed not only of the present Royal Academy, but of our modern system of art teaching and art exhibitions, yet few attempts have been made to trace its origin, or its developments previous to 1768. Walpole mentions the school of art with which Kneller was connected, but tells us nothing about it; and no more information is to be obtained from Edward Edwards, or Redgrave, or from William Sandby, who wrote the first history of the Royal Academy. Sir Frederick Eaton in the second history of that institution ignores Kneller altogether and gives the credit for directing the earliest school of art to Sir James Thornhill, who in this connection has received from historians more praise than he deserves.

The first Academy of drawing and painting from the life set up in England was founded in the autumn of 1711; and its cosmopolitan group of supporters included Sir Godfrey Kneller; Michael Dahl, the Swedish portrait painter, and Kneller's rival; Antonio Pellegrini, the Venetian; Louis Laguerre, the French decorative artist; and the Englishmen, Jonathan Richardson and James Thornhill. Three zealous supporters of the arts, Edmund Anderson, Anthony Cope and Henry Cooke, undertook to make the plan of the Academy known to London artists and to collect a subscription of a guinea each from those who agreed to support the undertaking; and suitable premises were found in Great Queen Street, not far from Kneller's house. Great Queen

Street, then and long afterwards a thoroughfare much favoured by painters, had in the seventeenth century been the dwelling-place of some of the most fashionable people in London, and certain of its houses are said to have been designed by Inigo Jones. But in 1711 the vogue for Great Queen Street was already a thing of the past, and a proof of this was to be seen in the ruinous condition of the mansion in which the new Academy made its head-quarters. "The subscription," says Vertue, who was one of the original students, "was a guinea for each person, paid down; the place for drawing a large room, ground floor, in the great house in the middle of Great Queen Street, near Lincoln's Inn Fields, where formerly many great noblemen had lived, and once the land-bank was kept there, but gone to decay and uninhabited."

On the evening of October 18th, 1711, more than sixty men were gathered together in the ancient house in Great Queen Street. It was the day of St. Luke, the patron of the artists, and the subscribers to the Academy had met for the purpose of electing a Governor and twelve Directors. Each subscriber brought with him a slip of paper on which he had written down the names of the men he thought most worthy to bear office, and an examination of the slips showed that the opinions were unanimous in favour of Kneller as Governor. The Directors chosen included Louis Laguerre; James Thornhill; Jonathan Richardson; Thomas Gibson; Francis Bird, the sculptor who carved the statue of Queen Anne that until recent times stood opposite the western front of St. Paul's Cathedral; and the Frenchman, Nicolas Dorigny, who, although his country was then at war with England, had arrived in London early in the preceding summer to make engravings from the Raphael Cartoons at Hampton Court.

Among those who took part in the election of the Governor and Directors were Hugh Howard, the artist and connoisseur; James Gibbs, the architect who designed the church of St. Martin's in the Fields; Christian Reisen, the seal engraver; John Simon, the mezzo-tinter; George Vertue, engraver and antiquary; and a number of painters, including Michael Dahl, Bernard Lens, John Wootton, Peter Tillemans, Joseph Goupy, Hans Huyssing, Peter Casteels, John Vanderbank, Robert Brown, and the deaf and dumb artist, Benjamin Ferrers. Some of the members of the new Academy were not professional artists.

STRICT RULE IN THE LIFE CLASS

James Seymour, for example, who in the list of members is described as "banker," was a wealthy collector of the period; who had known Lely and was the friend of Sir Christopher Wren, and was on terms more or less intimate with most men of standing in the art world of London. Himself a draughtsman of some ability, he was the father of James Seymour the artist, who was popularly supposed to be able to draw horses better than any man in England. The younger Seymour was a spend-thrift and a gambler, but adored by his father, who supported him in every extravagance and died a bankrupt.

Another amateur member of interest was Owen McSwiney, against whose name in the list "player" is written. McSwiney was an Irish dramatist and theatrical manager who was concerned at different times with the direction of the playhouses in Drury Lane and the Haymarket. It was he to whom Johnson applied for information about Dryden, of whom the Doctor wished to write a life. McSwiney was one of the few men then living who had known Dryden, and Boswell tells us of Johnson's disappointment when he found that the Irishman could tell him nothing of the poet except that at Wills' coffee-house he had one particular seat in the summer and another in the winter. McSwiney was always interested in pictures and painters, and when he lived in Venice acted as an intermediary between Canaletto, Rosalba, and other Italian artists and their patrons in England.

As Kneller's house was close to the Academy the newly elected Governor was able to watch closely the proceedings of the members and to see that the rules were observed. This he could do the more easily because three of his assistants, Byng, Weedman and Swartz, worked in the life class. The members included men of all ages and positions in life, and of several nationalities. Most of them were unused to discipline of any kind and the control of the Academy was not always easy. But Kneller's rule was strict and his authority respected, and in spite of intrigues against him he was re-elected Governor at the close of his first year of office. Unfortunately this gave offence to Michael Dahl, who thought that his position as a painter of Kings and Princes entitled him to the Governorship in the second year. Dahl, therefore, abandoned the Academy, but there were no other resignations except that of old Peter Berchett, the French artist who painted the ceiling of the chapel at Trinity College,

Oxford, and the staircase at Schomberg House, Pall Mall, afterwards the residence of Gainsborough. Berchett's resignation was due only to the bad ventilation of the room in which the life class was conducted. Vertue says that "he excused himself, being not well, tysicky, could not bear the smell of the lamp."

Twelve new members joined the Academy in the autumn of 1712. Among them were Captain Marcellus Laroon; Stephen Slaughter, afterwards Keeper of the Royal pictures under George the Second; Bartholomew Dandridge, who subsequently acquired a great practice in portraiture, which he carried on at Kneller's house in Great Queen Street after the German artist's death; and last, but not least, Sir Richard Steele. Whether the brilliant essayist ever worked in the Academy I have been unable to discover, but he appears to have been something more than an honorary member as his name is mentioned later as a Director of the institution. Steele's connection with the Academy gave him much pleasure, as he admits in a delightful letter printed in the *Spectator*, No. 555, of December 6th, 1712, "regarding an ingenious Sett of Gentlemen who have done me the Honour to make me one of their Society."

Captain Marcellus Laroon no doubt worked at the Academy as assiduously as any professional painter, for that singular and picturesque personage was a devoted lover of the arts and never lost a chance of practising them at any period of his romantic career. He was the son of another Marcellus Laroon, who, in the advertisement of the sale of the Captain's pictures in 1775, is described as "drawing master to King William the Third." The elder Laroon, who was of French extraction and brought to England when a child, spent most of his youth in Yorkshire, where he is supposed to have met Rembrandt.

"Vertue," says Walpole, "was told by old Mr. Laroon, who saw him in Yorkshire, that the celebrated Rembrandt was in England in 1661, and lived sixteen or eighteen months at Hull where he drew several gentlemen and seafaring persons. Mr. Dahl had one of these pictures."

If Dahl owned a portrait by Rembrandt painted in England, there could be no doubt of the truth of the story that the great Dutch master visited us in the seventeenth century. But Walpole, I think, did not read with sufficient care the passage in which Vertue says that the portrait in Dahl's possession represented "a sea-captain, with the gentleman's name, Rembrandt's

name and York, and the year 1661." On this Walpole based his statement, overlooking, however, the small but important corrections made by Vertue when he revised the note. After "gentleman's name" he interpolated "no," and "not so" after "York," and left, therefore, nothing in the inscription to connect the portrait with England or an English sitter.

The originator of the Rembrandt tradition brought up his son as an artist, but Marcellus Laroon the younger quarrelled with his father and, leaving home, adopted the stage as a profession. For two years he was at Drury Lane, not as an actor but as a singer, for he had considerable skill in music and "a noble, strong voice." Tiring of the stage, Laroon joined the army and, entering the Foot Guards as a cadet, fought under Marlborough at Oudenarde; and with Stanhope in the Spanish campaign, in which he was taken prisoner. When he was released, Laroon returned to England and at once joined Kneller's Academy, which had been founded in his absence. However, he remained in the army for many years, and had further adventures, not always in the most reputable society. Vertue, who worked with Laroon at the Academy, describes him as interesting but heartless, "... in many ways engaging in company, but always wanting no little conceit of his own capacity, and laughs upon some occasions at the death of his dearest friends."

Vertue says of Laroon's work that "he did some pictures from the life—bold, free manner with good spirit; Mr. Swinny's (McSwiney) and others as big as the life; and other pictures of conversations well designed, the composition remarkable and varied, though not so well coloured. They seem rather like drawings coloured with transparent colours, all over too much alike but have a good effect." One of these "pictures of conversation" by Laroon, executed in the peculiar fashion described by Vertue, is in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch, by whom it was lent for a time to the National Gallery in the spring of 1917. It represents an eighteenth-century musical party and reception, and its method of execution appears to have something in common with Gainsborough's varnished drawings. An interesting Laroon in a different manner, *Allegorical Scene*, the property of Mr. Osbert Sitwell, was shown in 1925 at the second exhibition of the Magnasco Society.

One of the most popular of the artists who worked at Great Queen Street in the earlier years of the Academy was Thomas

Gibson, a gentle, amiable man who painted among many portraits those of the Princess of Wales (daughter-in-law of George the Second) and several of her children. He was one of the best draughtsmen in the Academy, and much liked by the younger students whom he was always ready to advise. As a Director he was intimately concerned with the management of the life class, and the following correspondence suggests that he acted as the deputy of the Governor. In 1713 Kneller wrote to Gibson:—

“SIR,—

I am very glad to understand the Academy goes on well, and cannot doubt but our laws (which are writ and framed) will be continued, for it seems whosoever should make, or will alter, any part of them must be expelled (I mean without the major consent) for many have contributed to the paying of everything necessary, and with consent. All which I find mentioned in the orders which I have now by me to peruse by a copy, and where it is agreed to choose every year a Governor and Directors, on Monday before St. Luke, which is the next week, I think, and which I find is expected by all. Although some few are out of humour I cannot doubt but all will be very gentle and just. Mr. Coep (Cope?) being one of us—and ever was punctual in my opinion, and pray give my humble services to him, and not having an opportunity of seeing him or you before the day of election I recommend to your integrity and care, besides others who love and honour our art and settlement concerning the Academy, and you may be assured of my assistance, perhaps more than required.

Sir, your most humble servant and faithful friend,

G. KNELLER.

This to Mr. Gibson, a face painter.”

The Governor, whose epistolary style is not of the clearest, visited the Academy soon after the dispatch of this communication, which was probably sent from Whitton. Kneller soon reduced the refractory members to order. He says in a second letter:—

“I would acquaint you that I was at the Academy last night and proposed to the Society (which was above forty in number) if they would have the standing orders as they are now. They all—for I caused them to be read—consented, and hold-

ing up their hands as usual *nemine contradicente*, that their orders should stand, and that they are to submit to you what you see in the copy hereby. Pray be on Monday next at the Academy to assist in choosing the Directors and Governor, and a Treasurer for the year—which office if you would take it I am sure will be very acceptable to all.”

The control of the Academy remained in the hands of Sir Godfrey for several years, in spite of the intrigues of Sir James Thornhill (the father-in-law of Hogarth) who was actively supported by the French painter, Louis Cheron. Thornhill, an active and ambitious man, who had failed to interest Lord Halifax in a proposal to found a Royal Academy supported by the State and housed in permanent apartments near the King's Mews, made several endeavours to secure the management of the school in Great Queen Street. But he was resolutely opposed by Kneller, who made no attempt to conceal his disdain for the draughtsmanship of the English painter; or his anger when he found that Thornhill was making use of the school and its models to assist him in the decorative painting upon which he was engaged at Greenwich.

One evening when Sir Godfrey was visiting the Academy he noticed that the model was placed in a curious, crouching position, and demanded of the student nearest to him, who had set the figure in such a fashion. He was told that the pose had been given by Mr. Gibson, and that artist coming in at the moment was asked by the Governor why this uncommon attitude had been chosen. Gibson replied that he had received a letter from Mr. Thornhill (this was before he had been knighted) who was then at work upon the ceiling of the Painted Hall at Greenwich Hospital. Thornhill explained in his letter that as he was too busy to come to town, he enclosed several small sketches of figures in order that Gibson, whom he knew to be a good draughtsman, would place models in similar positions and send his studies of them to Greenwich. The meaning of this was at once clear to Sir Godfrey. “I see, I see!” he cried scornfully. “Mr. Dornhill is a wise man. But if I was Mr. Dornhill I should let Mr. Gibson draw *all* my figures for me.”

However, in the struggle for the leadership of the Academy time was on the side of Thornhill, and Kneller, growing old, resigned the position of Governor and was succeeded by his younger rival, who was elected on St. Luke's Day, 1716.

Thornhill, then at Blenheim, acknowledged the compliment in a letter of October 29th:—

“To the Directors of the Academy, Great Queen Street.

GENTLEMEN,

I thank you for the honour you have done me in choosing me your Governor. I am sensible with how great disadvantage I come after so great a man as Sir Godfrey Kneller, but do assure you that I will not be behind him in a perpetual endeavour to do service to a Society, who, if they were as publicly encouraged as in Nations round about us, would not fail to do service and credit to our King and Country.

JAMES THORNHILL.”

Thornhill, who evidently had not forgotten the refusal of Lord Halifax to support his scheme for a Royal Academy, was appointed Governor at Great Queen Street by a majority of votes, but many of the members would have preferred to see in his place Louis Laguerre, that facile French history painter who was the godson of Louis the Fourteenth and is immortalized unkindly by Pope in the well-known couplet:—

“On painted ceilings you devoutly stare
Where sprawl the saints of Verrio or Laguerre.”

In some respects the huge, good-natured Frenchman would have made a capital Governor; for Vertue describes him as “a man free of access, pleasant conversation, and always willing to help and instruct in his art. I had the favour in my juvenile studies and shall always be indebted to his memory.” But Laguerre was a modest man, incapable alike of intrigue or of pushing his own interests, and he failed to contend successfully with Thornhill at the Academy as he had failed before in the affair of the commission for the decoration of the cupola of St. Paul’s Cathedral. Laguerre was originally appointed to execute the paintings in the cupola, but Thornhill managed to displace the Frenchman and secure the commission for himself.

Laguerre survived but for a few years the capture of the Academy by Thornhill. He died in 1721, in a fit of apoplexy, at the little theatre in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, while he was waiting for the curtain to rise on the first scene of *The Island Princess* in which his son, the painter-actor, John Laguerre, had a singing part. Of the younger Laguerre few records survive, but they

indicate that he inherited the amiable qualities of his father, and that he was a gifted though unfortunate man. Many years after his death one of his admirers commented on the exceeding brevity of the sketch of the life of John Laguerre given in the *Anecdotes of Painting in England* and added to it some new particulars.

"Mr. Walpole," he wrote, "says little more of John Laguerre than that he had a talent for painting, that he published some prints of Hob in the Well, and died in indigent circumstances. But there are many persons now living who will call to mind with pleasure and anxiety that agreeable companion, Jack Laguerre. He was no mean portrait painter; his picture of Spiller, the comedian, was truly characteristic of that facetious droll. I believe he excelled most in scene painting, and was often employed in that business by Mr. Rich to whom he was besides greatly useful in his Pantomimes, particularly in his character of the Burgomaster, and in the Frenchman in *Perseus and Andromeda*. But his principal part was Hob in *The Country Wake*, which he acted with true comic simplicity. He was besides an excellent mimic of the insignificant strut and aggravated action of Opera singers.

"One of Jack Laguerre's last projects was opening a tavern in St. Martin's Lane; and his sign of St. Martin cutting off a piece of his garment to cover the nakedness of a beggar who solicited his charity was a good specimen of his skill in painting. He had abundance of true comic humour but his continued distresses prevented the cultivation of his theatrical talents."

Thornhill ruled the Academy until he was deposed in his turn by another faction. He then set up a school of his own at his house in Covent Garden; while the party that deposed him, headed by Cheron, and Vanderbank the portrait painter, abandoned the room in Great Queen Street and established a new Academy in St. Martin's Lane, which was attended by many of the original members. Louis Cheron was a French painter educated at Paris and Rome, who came to England in the train of the Duke of Montagu. He had some of the qualities of his countryman Laguerre, "an affable, good natured temper, very communicative of his art, with a plain, open sincerity that made him agreeable and beloved. Very assiduous at the Academy, and by the young people much imitated."

One of the younger men who had profited from the instruction offered so freely by Cheron was John Vanderbank, his co-adjutor in the conduct of the new Academy. Vanderbank, whose three-quarter length of Sir Isaac Newton hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, was a dissolute, extravagant man who died in early middle age, broken down by his excesses. But in the opinion of Vertue, who had known Vanderbank from his boyhood upwards, this spendthrift and profligate had more natural ability than any of his contemporaries, among whom, it should be remembered, Hogarth was included. Vertue ranked him "in the art of drawing and painting, of all men born in this nation superior in skill." Vanderbank was one of the most fashionable artists of his time and on excellent terms with the Royal family. The Prince and Princess of Wales would sometimes call at his house and watch him at work when he was painting any person of their acquaintance, and Queen Caroline sat to him not long before his death, which took place in Holles Street, Cavendish Square, on December 23rd, 1739.

CHAPTER TWO

The new Academy in St. Martin's Lane; Hogarth a student; Cheselden the surgeon joins it; Arthur Pond "the top virtuoso in London"; The Prince of Wales visits the Academy; Gives five guineas to the model; Sir Andrew Fountaine and Swift; Death of Kneller; His colossal conceit; A dream interview with St. Luke; Vanderstraeten the lightning painter; Thirty pictures a day; The Duke of Richmond's commissions to Canaletto and Rosalba; Pictures for Goodwood; Collapse of the St. Martin's Lane Academy; Its revival by Hogarth; The life school at Salisbury Court; Watteau in England; Dr. Mead's connection with him; The Doctor's picture gallery in Great Ormond Street; Pond's portrait of him; A shock to his vanity; Hogarth commends the work of Quentin La Tour the pastellist.

EARLY in October, 1720, Cheron and Vanderbank opened their Academy in St. Martin's Lane, in "a great room" which had before been used as a meeting house, according to Hogarth, whose name appears this year for the first time in the list of members. He says that at St. Martin's Lane Cheron and Vanderbank engaged female models to pose for the life class with the idea of making it more attractive. Hogarth's statement suggests that at Great Queen Street only male models were employed, but of this we have no certain knowledge. The fee was two guineas for the season, from October until the spring. Next to Hogarth's name in the list is that of Alexander Gamble, "enameller," who probably joined the Academy with him and was a relation of Ellis Gamble the silversmith to whom Hogarth was apprenticed. Another student of 1720 was William Cheselden, the famous surgeon, and the friend of Pope, who said that he was "the most noted and the most deserving man in the whole profession of chirurgery." Cheselden, who was described as being not only the best anatomist of his time but the best carver at a dinner table, no doubt joined the Academy to improve his knowledge of the technicalities of drawing in which he was deeply interested. He has left a record of the difficulties he experienced in producing the illustrations for his *Osteographia, or the Anatomy of the Bones*, a stately folio published in 1735. A portfolio of Cheselden's drawings—careful studies of bones—may be seen in the Library of the Royal Academy.

Joseph Highmore was also among the students of 1720; and William Kent too, the architect and painter who was afterwards acclaimed as an authority on the arts at large and was the target

for many satiric shafts directed by Hogarth—for which, however, Kent made him pay dearly in more ways than one. Kent was not the only future arbiter of taste who worked in St. Martin's Lane in the winter of 1720-1. Among his fellow students was Arthur Pond, painter, etcher, dealer and connoisseur. Twenty years afterwards Vertue declared sarcastically, "Mr. Pond is the greatest or top virtuoso in London, followed, esteemed and cried up—Mr. Pond—all in all!"

In October, 1722, the opening of the classes was announced in the newspapers. "This week the Academy for the Improvement of Painters and Sculptors by drawing from the Naked, open'd in St. Martin's Lane, and will continue during the Winter as usual. N.B. The Company have agreed not to draw on Mondays and Saturdays."

A few weeks after the appearance of this advertisement the growing importance of the Academy was recognized by a Royal visit to the life school. It was made by the Prince of Wales, in the evening when the model was sitting. The Prince (afterwards George the Second) was attended by Lord Herbert and Sir Andrew Fountaine. He stayed an hour at the Academy watching the members at work, and on his departure ordered that five guineas should be given to the woman who was sitting as model. Sir Andrew Fountaine, by whom perhaps the Prince's attention was called to the Academy, was a prominent figure at that time in the London art world. A member of an old family long settled at Narford in Norfolk, he was a connoisseur not only of pictures but of antiquities of all kinds; of illuminated books and manuscripts, of enamels, and above all of pottery.

Jonathan Richardson the younger says that in gathering such things as these Sir Andrew proved himself "one of the keenest virtuosi in Europe and out-Italianized the Italians themselves." The Pope's antiquary, Ficaroni, described to Richardson, with some pride, the way in which he and Fountaine conspired successfully to overreach and deceive an abbot who had inherited a fine collection of medals of the value of which he was ignorant. Sir Andrew's collection of majolica and other ware remained in the possession of his family until 1884 when its dispersal was the principal event of the season at Christie's.

Sir Andrew knew most of the important artists and literary men of his time. He was the close friend of Swift, whom he appears to have led into occasional extravagances that troubled

DEATH OF KNELLER

the mind of the thrifty Dean, as he deplores in his *Journal to Stella*. Swift, after boasting to Stella of the rigorous economy of his life in London, had to admit in a later letter that Sir Andrew Fountaine "would needs have me go to a tavern, where for two bottles of wine, Portugal and Florence, among three of us, we had sixteen shillings to pay—but if ever he catches me so again. . . . We had a neck of mutton that the dog could not eat." Nevertheless, for all his brave words Swift was once more drawn from the straight path by the gay knight as he confesses in another letter to Stella. "To-day I was all about St. Paul's, and up at the top like a fool with Sir Andrew Fountaine and two more, and spent seven shillings for my dinner, like a puppy—this is the second time he has served me so."

Sir Godfrey Kneller lived just long enough to witness the decay of the Academy of which he had been the first Governor and the successful development of the institution that succeeded it. He died on October 27th, 1723, three years after the foundation of the new Academy, full of a mistaken confidence in the immortality of his own painting. Pope, who always laughed at Kneller's conceit, though constantly applauding him in public, paid a visit to the painter when he was dying. "I think," said Pope, "I never saw a scene of so much vanity. He was lying in his bed contemplating the plan he had made for his monument; he said he should not like to lie among the rascals at Westminster—a memorial there would be sufficient, and desired me to write an epitaph for it. I did so afterwards, and I think it is the worst thing I ever did in my life."

When Kneller in his last hours was dreading the approach of death Pope tried to comfort him by saying that as he had been a good man in this world the Almighty would be sure to look after him in the next, but the painter was too much attached to his country house and its material comforts to be interested in the possible joys of Heaven. "Ah, my good friend, Mr. Pope," he cried, "I wish God would let me stay at Whitton."

Yet his vision of the next world and of his flattering reception there by St. Luke ought to have offered some hope and consolation to a man so completely egotistical. He told Pope that in his dream he found himself walking along a narrow path at the end of which was a gateway round which a crowd was gathered. As he drew nearer he saw that St. Peter, whom he recognized by his keys, and other of the Apostles, were engaged

in passing members of the crowd through the gateway, beyond which he could see many seats, some filled and others vacant. When he reached the gate St. Peter had just asked the name of one of the applicants for admission and was now inquiring as to his religion. "I am a Roman Catholic," said the spirit. "Go then," said St. Peter, "and take one of the seats on the right hand." The next was a Presbyterian, who, after the usual questions, was also admitted but told to take a seat on the left.

"My turn came next," said Kneller, "and as I approached St. Peter very civilly asked my name. I said it was Kneller. I had no sooner said so than St. Luke (who was standing just by) turned to me and said with a good deal of sweetness:— 'What! The famous Sir Godfrey Kneller from England?' 'The very same, Sir,' says I, 'at your service.' On this St. Luke immediately drew near to me, embraced me, and made me a great many compliments on the art we had both of us followed in this world. He entered so far into the subject that he seemed almost to have forgotten the business for which I had come. At last, however, he seemed to have recollected himself, and said:— 'I beg your pardon, Sir Godfrey; I was so taken up with the pleasure of conversing with you. . . . But, apropos, pray, Sir, what religion may you be of?' 'Why, truly, Sir,' says I, 'I am of no religion.' 'Oh, Sir,' says he, 'you will be so good then as to go and take your place just where you please.'"

Pope's epitaph, of which he professed to think so little, is based on that of Raphael. The poet says of the German painter:—

"Kneller, by Heav'n and not a master taught,
Whose Art was Nature and whose Pictures thought;
Now from two ages having snatched from Fate
Whate'er was beauteous or whate'er was great,
Lies crowned with Princes', Poets' lays,
Due to his Merit and brave Thirst of praise.
Living, great Nature fear'd he might outvie
Her works; and dying, fears herself may die."

Every one knows Walpole's account of Pope's wager that no compliment was too effusive for Kneller to swallow, a wager he won by suggesting to the artist that if the Almighty had been helped by him at the Creation the universe would have been more perfectly formed. "Fore God, Sir, I believe so," said Kneller. This is the story according to Walpole, but in an earlier

version of it (1753) there is no mention of a wager, and Kneller, so far from being imposed upon by Pope's question is described as crushing him with a brutal repartee. In this version it is said that Pope, once viewing a number of portraits by Kneller, remarked with a sneer, "It is a pity, Sir Godfrey, you had not been consulted at the Creation." Kneller glanced at the poet's deformed and shrunken figure. "Yes," he said, "I believe I could have made some things better." There is another story of the defeat of Pope by a coarse wit who was as merciless in retort as the German painter. Pope's favourite expletive is said to have been "God mend me," and he used the expression one day in a dispute with a hackney coachman. "Mend *you*," said the man. "Why it would not be half the trouble to make a new one."

Curious evidences of Kneller's vanity have been handed down to us by Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, who knew him well. Discussing his faith one day with the Bishop, Kneller gave the following as his articles of religion. Firstly, that God Almighty was the most ingenious of all beings. Secondly, that he, therefore, loved all ingenious persons. Thirdly, that painting is one of the most ingenious of arts as it preserves for centuries the resemblance of deceased persons. Fourthly, that he himself was the most ingenious of all painters. Kneller seems to have believed that he was a master of realism, a theory that is not supported by his work as we see it to-day. Bishop Pearce said that when he was at Kneller's country seat at Whitton the artist conducted him to a summer house in the garden. A full-length portrait of Lady Kneller was hanging on the wall and the visitor observed that the lower part of the canvas was scratched and damaged. He inquired the cause and was gravely assured by Sir Godfrey that the damage had been done by a favourite dog of Lady Kneller's which was accustomed to lie in her lap. The dog, he said, had mistaken his mistress's portrait for herself and had scratched at the painted skirts in the hope that she would take him up.

It is not strange that Sir Godfrey had an incredibly high opinion of his own importance, for many of the great men of the time seem to have conspired to spoil him. "Can one wonder," says Walpole, "that a man was vain who had been flattered by Dryden, Addison, Prior, Pope and Steele?" Nor did his popularity wane with advancing years, as we see from some correspondence of 1719, when Kneller was over seventy. James Craggs, George the First's Secretary of State, had asked him to

dine at Battersea, a great place for junketing in those days, with Pope, and Dr. Arbuthnot—that “trusted adviser of all the wits,” as Leslie Stephen calls him. Kneller, unfortunately, met with an accident just before the day fixed for the party, to the deep regret of Craggs, whose letter to Pope shows how high the painter stood in the esteem of the Secretary of State.

“You’ll easily understand,” says Craggs, “how much I am concerned at the accident which has befallen him; but I comfort myself since his head and hand—which I could least have spared—retain their former vigour and condition. I don’t see why this misfortune is to be completed by the loss of Dr. Arbuthnot’s and your good company, which you’ll give me leave to expect to-morrow at Battersea, when we will drink Sir Godfrey’s health and make a new appointment against his recovery.”

The party was held without Kneller, who, however, wrote to Pope in extraordinary English to assure him that he would be at Battersea in spirit if not in body; and, further, that he can get no sleep at night except in the day time!

“DEAR FRIEND,

I hope your Genos dos and will know myn is with the most acceptable and accomplished Company To-morrow; for my Body is in no condition to stirr out of my bed as yet, and has had no rest there these two nights but what it snatches and gets in the day time by fits; and I believe my Left Lag will be out of Order a good wyle. Pray give my hearty good will to the Compa. for the Deeds and my most humble Servis
being yours ever

G. KNELLER.”

Despite the aid of his many assistants Kneller had been unable towards the end of his life to keep pace with the commissions that poured in upon him, and it is said that he left five hundred portraits unfinished. It is curious that his first portrait manufactory should have been transformed afterwards into a warehouse for the cheap and superficial paintings that were popular as wall decorations at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. Kneller in the first half of his career in England lived for many years in the Piazza, Covent Garden; and immediately after his removal to Great Queen Street advertisements appeared in the newspapers announcing that “a

collection of paintings fit for staircases, chimnies or doors" was to be sold "out of hand at any reasonable rate, at the late dwelling house of Sir Godfrey Kneller." The demand in England for this kind of work was then enormous as the fashion for these painted decorations prevailed not only in the homes of the rich but in those of the middle classes. Edward Edwards says, referring to the period between 1700 and 1750 :—

"The panels of the rooms and more frequently the compartments over the chimney and doors were filled with some kind of picture which was seldom the original work of any master but was commonly the production of some copyist who subsisted by manufacturing such decorative pieces and was glad to furnish a landscape on a half length canvas for forty or fifty shillings."

Joseph Highmore gives a curious description of one of these painters of cheap decorative pictures whom he saw at work in a house near Drury Lane about 1714. A Dutchman, named Vanderstraeten, he must have been, as Highmore declares, one of the most expeditious painters that ever lived, for he could produce in one day thirty landscapes of the size then known as "three-quarters"—about twenty-seven inches by twenty. He worked with large pans filled with ready mixed paints standing on the ground near his easel, some of which contained what he called "cloud colour" and different shades of blues and whites for the skies; and others various tones of greens, reds and browns. With the aid of a boy to remove the canvases in turn and replace them by others he went over them in regular stages, first painting all the skies, then the middle portions, and finally the foregrounds.

"He hired a long garret," says Highmore, "where he painted cloths many feet in length, as long as they were woven, and painted the whole at once, continuing the sky in the manner above described from one end to the other, and then the several grounds etc., till the whole was one long landscape. This he cut and sold by parcels as demanded to fit chimnies etc., and those who dealt in this way would go to his house and buy three or four, or any number of feet of landscapes. One day when Vanderstraeten's wife called him to dinner he cried out, 'I will come presently; I have done our Saviour, I have only the Twelve Apostles to do.' Nor is this improbable of such a man, who could paint a figure of the size he usually

practised in a minute, a spot for the head and two or three touches for the rest. And notwithstanding they were so slight even these pictures were not altogether devoid of merit, for he had something like genius and taste and painted much in the style of Francisque and did all that could be done in the time he allowed himself. He was the first man I ever saw paint, and I may perhaps be partial to him on that account, having had great pleasure when young in visiting him."

For richer patrons Thornhill and Kent executed a considerable amount of decorative painting, but most of the work of this kind in the palaces and houses of the nobility was done by Italian or French artists, many of whom were practising in England at the time referred to by Edwards and Highmore. Some of their work, however, was done abroad, as, for example, the large emblematical pictures representing the actions of English heroes, statesmen and patriots, mentioned by Walpole as painted for the second Duke of Richmond. These pictures were produced in Venice, under the supervision of Owen McSwiney, who as the Duke's agent also bought works for him from various Italian artists, including Canaletto, and Rosalba the pastellist.

His dealings with these artists are mentioned in some letters preserved at Goodwood, from which by permission of the Duke of Richmond I am able to give extracts. The most important of McSwiney's letters is one written at Venice on November 28th, 1727, and addressed to the second Duke of Richmond. It contains an interesting reference to Rosalba and tells us something of the character and methods of Canaletto and of the demand for his pictures at this time, when the Venetian was a young man of thirty. McSwiney, after referring to some earlier transactions with the painter on his own account, says of Canaletto:—

"The fellow is whimsical and vary's his prices every day; and he that has a mind to have any of his work must not seem to be too fond of it, for he'l be worse treated for it, both in the price, and the painting too.

"He has more work than he can doe in any reasonable time, and well; but by the assistance of a particular friend of his I got once in two months a piece sketched out, and a little time afterwards finished by force of bribery.

"I send your Grace by Captain Robinson (Commander of

the *Tokely Gully*) who sails from hence to-morrow, *two of the Finest pieces* I think he has ever painted and of the same size with Mr. Southwell's little ones (which is a size he excels in) and are done upon copper plates. They cost me two and twenty sequens each. They'll be delivered to yr Grace by Mr. John Smith as soon as they arrive in London.

"You shall be served by the Rosalba better than you hoped for, the original of the German Girl (that is of her face) being still in her hands. But you must say nothing of this because the piece you saw is now in London. She promises to finish ye dress (the designs of which she has by her in several sketches) in a month's time. But I must take a fine gold frame and the chrystal that is bespoke for it, which together with ye picture will come to about four or five and twenty sequens.

"I shall have a view of the Rialto Bridge, done by Canal, in twenty days, and I have bespoke another view of Venice, for, by the bye, his excellence lyes in painting things which fall immediately under his eye.

"The four pieces of Canal come to 88 *sequens*, and the Rosalba etc. to 24, which comes to about *Fifty Six Guineas sterling* and if your Grace will permit me to charge Four Guineas more for the Freight and expenses in packing 'em up and sending 'em on board with ye Customs etc., and some former expenses of the same nature, the same will amount to sixty guineas, which I'll draw for at twice, as yr Grace desires."

The Duke of Richmond informs me that the emblematical pictures painted in Venice have disappeared, and that nothing is known of them at Goodwood. But they were there for a long time, and Vertue saw them when the second Duke of Richmond took him to his Sussex seat in June, 1747. Vertue describes the Duke's dining-room as "adorned with many paintings of late Masters—Italy—done by his Grace's order, representing the heroes of this age in emblematical subjects, being eulogiums in their praise," and mentions some engravings of them which still exist. Ten happy days were spent by Vertue at Goodwood. The Duke took him to see the ruins of the Abbey at Boxgrove, and behaved with charming courtesy to his guest, who, at length, "having occasion to return to London, his Grace sent me up with his calash, and when I parted with him said he hoped to see me there again."

The subsequent disappearance of the pictures Vertue saw hanging in the dining-room at Goodwood need cause us few regrets, except for the fact, revealed in one of the Goodwood letters, that Canaletto worked on the background of two of them. McSwiney says of the pictures of Lord Somers and Bishop Tillotson, "the perspective and landscape are painted by Canaletto and Cimeroli." In a letter of January 16th, 1728, the Duke is advised of the despatch from Venice of three of the emblematical works and of their risk of capture by Spanish cruisers on their way to England.

"The three pictures (to the memory's of Earls Cadogan, Godolphin and Bishop Tillotson) are cased up; and lye ready to be imbarqued on board the first ship that sails hence for London: That is if the news from London gives us any hopes of an accommodation with Spain, for I should be sorry that these pictures met with the same fate that yr picture by Rosalba did; therefore I shall take my measures about 'em from the advices in the following Gazettes, and Canaletto has just finished the piece of the Rialto Bridge, and as soon as it's companion is done I'll forward 'em to you with the Country Girle by Rosalba."

On the 28th of February McSwiney writes that Captain Robinson's galley may be expected in the Thames within a few days with two more pictures painted for the Duke by Canaletto. "The other two," he says, "with the German Girle by Rosalba, I'll forward by the next opportunity." However, the "German Girle," which may have been identical with the "Country Girle," was a long time in hand and it is not until the 30th of July that the agent is able to announce that Rosalba's picture is finished and is only waiting for the completion of yet another painting on copper by Canaletto. "As soon as I can get it out of his hands," writes McSwiney, "I'll forward 'em to you." The second Duke of Richmond appears to have been a great admirer of Canaletto; and, as I shall show in another chapter, he was one of the first to give commissions to the Venetian painter when he visited London in 1746.

Returning now to the history of art teaching in London, Thornhill's attempt to found a private school of his own ended in failure. The attendance was small and an effort to extend it by admitting students free of charge was unsuccessful. Thornhill's Academy was soon closed, but that in St. Martin's Lane existed



By permission of the Royal Academy of Arts

See p. 342

Joseph Wilton, R.A., and J. H. Mortimer, A.R.A. (seated) with a student,
in the Duke of Richmond's Gallery of Casts

From a Painting by J. H. Mortimer, A.R.A.

until the treasurer embezzled the subscriptions. The landlord, unable to obtain his rent, seized the furniture, and it seemed likely that London would lose its art school until Hogarth came to the rescue and founded a second St. Martin's Lane Academy. This was not long after the death of Thornhill, when Hogarth had come into the possession of the fittings of the life school founded by his father-in-law at Covent Garden. Hogarth, writing many years afterwards, and not long before his death, said:—

"I lent to the Society the furniture that had belonged to Sir James Thornhill's Academy; and attributing the failure of the preceding Academies to the leading members having assumed a superiority which their fellow students could not brook, I proposed that every member should contribute an equal sum towards the support of the establishment and have an equal right to vote on every question relative to its affairs. By these regulations the Academy has now existed nearly thirty years, and is for every useful purpose equal to that in France or any other."

This Academy was founded in the winter of 1735, and about the same time another school for painting and drawing from the life was opened. This was "the little society which met at Salisbury Court," mentioned by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and its chief promoter was George Michael Moser, the Swiss artist who became afterwards the first Keeper of the Royal Academy. He was supported by Marcus Tuschler and by James ("Athenian") Stuart. Edwards says that this school, which was afterwards united to the one in St. Martin's Lane, was at one time carried on in Greyhound Court, Arundel Street.

At Hogarth's Academy the founder was at first assisted by John Ellis (or Ellys), a man of easy fortune who had been the pupil of Thornhill and had assisted him in the decoration of the Painted Hall at Greenwich. Ellis was at one time high in the favour of Sir Robert Walpole, whom he advised as to the purchase of pictures; and Walpole gave him the appointment—a singular one for an artist—of Keeper of the Lions at the Tower, the salary and perquisites of which he enjoyed for many years. The St. Martin's Lane Academy, to the later history of which I shall refer in succeeding chapters, was the nursery of many English painters, and there is reason to believe that both Reynolds and Gainsborough worked at times within its walls.

In his notes on Kneller's Academy and the artists of the early eighteenth century, Vertue frequently mentions the minor Continental painters working in England, but tells us little or nothing, unfortunately, about two great French masters who visited this country, Watteau and Quentin La Tour. The only reference Vertue makes to Watteau's visit is a mention of two pictures by him in Dr. Mead's collection, "conversations painted while he was in England." Walpole, who knew the physician and may have obtained his information through him, says that Watteau came to England "only to consult Dr. Mead," and this is probably correct, for there seems to be no record of his seeking commissions or painting any pictures here except the two mentioned, which were *L'Amour Paisible* and *Comediens Italiens*. Sir Claude Phillips in his monograph on Watteau, which is the best account of the artist by an English writer, seems inclined to doubt whether the artist painted the two pictures in this country, and it is indeed surprising that he could have produced them in such unfavourable conditions.

But Vertue's statement of 1724 is strong evidence of their place of origin, and it is confirmed by a note in a descriptive catalogue of Dr. Mead's collection, published by his family, apparently as a memorial, the year after his death. The writer of the catalogue mentions *L'Amour Paisible* under the title of *A Pastoral Conversation*, and its size, two feet by two feet six inches; and then says of the second work:—"A company of Italian Comedians by the same and of the same size. Watteau being in England and not in the best of health or circumstances, Dr. Mead relieved him in both and employed him in painting these two pictures, which are engraved by Baron." The doctor evidently admired the work of his patient, for when his collection of prints was sold one of the lots was described as "All the works of Watteau, finely bound in Russia leather and gilt." This found a purchaser at twenty-five guineas.

Dr. Richard Mead, who befriended Watteau, was a physician of European reputation. His friend Dr. Maty declared that "no foreigner of any learning, taste, or even curiosity, ever came to England without being introduced to Dr. Mead; as it would have been a matter of reproach to have returned without seeing him. On these occasions his table was always open; where, what seldom happens, the magnificence of Princes was united with the pleasures of Philosophers."

DR. MEAD'S PICTURE GALLERY

His professional income was very large and enabled him to indulge in his taste for pictures, of which he had a collection in a gallery attached to his house in Great Ormond Street. This collection originated in the purchase of a Spagnoletto, *The Flaying of St. Bartholomew*, which attracted him by its "just anatomical expression of the muscles." Some professional interest was also attached to a picture of *The Landing of Æsculapius at Rome at the time of the Plague*, which was painted for Mead by Panini purposely to adorn the gallery in Great Ormond Street. There it was hung above the mantelpiece on which stood a bronze head of Homer, formerly in the Arundelian collection, which Lord Exeter purchased at Dr. Mead's sale and presented to the British Museum. The collection in the gallery also included Holbein's portrait of Erasmus, and examples of Rubens, Vandyck, Giulio Romano, Hals, Teniers, Rembrandt and Claude; and among contemporary work two Venetian studies by Canaletto, a portrait by Richardson of the doctor's friend Pope, and portraits of Captain Coram and Flora Macdonald by Allan Ramsay.

All these pictures were sold by Langford in the spring of 1754, a few weeks after Mead's death, when *A Pastoral Conversation* realized £42, and "its companion Italian Comedians" £52 10s. According to a priced catalogue of the sale both were bought by "Beckford," possibly Alderman Beckford, father of the author of *Vathek*. The only drawing by Watteau in the doctor's collection, sold with another by Bischoff in the same lot, fetched a guinea.

Dr. Mead was one of the first of English collectors to throw open his gallery to students of painting, who were allowed to copy in the morning at Great Ormond Street; and even professional copyists were admitted, such as those employed frequently by Arthur Pond, the dealer and artist. Pond drew the doctor's portrait more than once, and Vertue tells a story of one of the portraits which proves that Mead, great and good man as he seems to have been, possessed his full share of vanity. It was an etched portrait in profile "in the manner of Rembrandt," in which the sitter was represented without a wig and with short, rough hair. The doctor was shocked when he saw a proof:—"passionately desired Mr. Pond to suppress it, that it might not be sold to anyone or seen—nay, would have had the plate to destroy it, from whence this proceeded the Dr. would not give

any answer or reason. We may easily guess that it appears like an old mumper, as Rembrandt's heads usually do . . . not the true characteristic of a fine gentleman as Dr. Mead always appears."

Quentin La Tour practised in England when he was a young man, but nothing appears to be known of his work here although he must have had many commissions. A year or two after La Tour's death a long article on his career was published in a London newspaper, in which it was said that at the diplomatic congress held at Cambrai in 1724 the Ministers of many Powers were gathered together. "The portraits of several of these were painted by young La Tour with such success that the English Ambassador prevailed on him to accompany him to London, where he received the most flattering encouragement."

I have found no mention in Vertue's note-books of the visit of this famous artist in pastel, but there is a curious reference to his work in Allan Ramsay's *Dialogue on Taste*, written probably soon after the middle of the eighteenth century, as the copy of the second edition, the only one in the British Museum, is dated 1762. The characters in Ramsay's sketch are Lord Modish and his friend Colonel Freeman, and their conversation is supposed to take place at his Lordship's country seat. In the course of the discussion on taste Lord Modish says he is aware that rules exist for the criticism of the arts, but does not think they are as well known as his friend seems to believe. The Colonel tells him that he can easily apply a test:—

"Your Lordship has only to hide yourself behind the screen in your drawing room and order Mrs. Hannah to bring in one of your tenants' daughters, and I venture to lay a wager that she shall be struck with your picture by La Tour, and no less by the view of your seat by Lambert, and shall, fifty to one, express her approbation by saying they are *vastly natural*. When she has said this she has shown that she knew all the proper standards by which her approbation was to be directed as much at least as she would have done if she had got Aristotle by heart, and all his commentators. He has defined those arts as arts of imitation and his definition, though often obscured and confounded by modern connoisseurs, has never been contradicted by any."

Here Ramsay speaks of La Tour as if he were a typical fashionable painter whose portraits would be expected to figure in the

houses of the nobility, but if they were frequently to be seen in England at that time what has become of them? It is strange that Cotes in his note on pastel painters quoted on p. 267, Vol. I, says nothing about La Tour, though he mentions both Rosalba and Liotard.

But that Hogarth knew and admired the pastels of La Tour is proved by some correspondence in 1749 between the Hon. Philip Yorke and his friend Daniel Wray. Yorke, a wealthy young man of artistic tastes, went with his wife to Paris in the autumn of 1749, and Wray, who was then living with Arthur Pond the artist-dealer, wrote from London from time to time to advise him of things in the French capital that he ought not to miss. In particular he urges him to look out for the work of the French sculptors, of whom he thinks highly. "Call in too at Chardin's, who paints little pieces of common life, and upon Liotard, admirable in crayons. All due praise we allow these artists, but we believe when you have heard their prices you will be able to convince people here that Oram and Scott and Pond are not extravagantly paid." But when writing again to Yorke a week or two later Wray says:—"Give me leave to correct a mistake in my last letter. The Crayonist whom I meant to commend (from Hogarth's testimony) is La Tour. I confounded him with Liotard."

CHAPTER THREE

New anecdotes of Hogarth; Vertue on his "cunning, artful contrivances"; How Thornhill obtained a knighthood; Pictures at Canons; Marriage of the Princess Royal; Hogarth proposes to sketch the ceremony; Prevented by Kent and ejected from the Royal Chapel; Hogarth's commission to paint the Royal Family; Vandermyn and the Princess Royal; A strange story contradicted; Philip Mercier painting in Yorkshire; George the Second as a patron of the arts; Queen Caroline finds the Holbein heads at Kensington Palace; How they came there; Pope as a painter; His friend and teacher, Jervas; Joseph Highmore; His character by Vertue; Highmore's illustrations to "Pamela"; He paints Dr. Young of "Night Thoughts"; His friendship with Samuel Richardson; Vanloo arrives in London; Women painters; Lady Burlington; Sarah Hoadly's romance; The Abbé Le Blanc on English portrait painters in 1740; Their dependence on Vanaken the drapery man; Winstanley's curious methods of portraiture.

MANY books have been written on Hogarth, the outstanding figure among the British artists of the first half of the eighteenth century; but none of his biographers, from Walpole downwards, has made much use of Vertue's notes concerning him. They were all at Walpole's disposal, because, after Vertue's death he purchased the engraver's diaries and papers from his widow. But Vertue's comments upon Hogarth are frequently unflattering, and Walpole would have found it difficult to embody them in the eulogistic sketch of the career of the great artist and satirist which he wrote for the *Anecdotes of Painting in England*.

It must not be imagined that Vertue failed to recognize Hogarth's extraordinary ability. He recognized and appreciated it fully, and his unflattering, and occasionally severe, comments on the artist who lived at the Golden Head in Leicester Fields are connected only with his private character and his business transactions. Vertue, himself a modest and honourable man, complains frequently of Hogarth's overweening self-confidence and assurance; of his amazing conceit, and of his "cunning, artful contrivances" in forwarding his interests and the sale of his works. It was Hogarth's good opinion of himself, says Vertue, that put all other artists at defiance; for he "by his undaunted spirit, despised and undervalued all other present and preceding painters of the highest reputation. Such reasoning or envious detraction he made the subject of his conversation and observations to gentlemen and lovers of art." To those who pandered

to this weakness by praising his work extravagantly he appears to have fallen an easy victim. The writer of some reminiscences of Hogarth, published a few years after his death in the *London Courant*, declared that "Garrick himself was not more ductile to flattery. A word in favour of his *Sigismunda* might have commanded a proof print or forced an original sketch out of our artist's hands. The furnisher of this remark owes one of his scarcest performances to the success of a compliment which might have stuck even in Sir Godfrey Kneller's throat."

Hogarth's conceit and unsparing bitterness of tongue and pencil made him many enemies, and the number of these was not decreased by his marriage to the daughter of Sir James Thornhill, a man who had some of the business qualities of his son-in-law but lacked his genius, and whose knighthood is said to have been the fruit of an intrigue. When Thornhill was commissioned by George the First to decorate certain rooms at Kensington Palace he was intimate with a well-known solicitor named Huggins, at one time Warden of the Fleet Prison, who had recently assisted Lord Sunderland in some delicate private negotiations. Vertue, who tells the story, says:—

"Lord Sunderland had an affair of no great reputation to him, from which he tried to escape by the cunning and artifice of Huggins—who brought him off. This put Sunderland under such obligations to Huggins that he was ready to obtain any favours for him, which he did, for him and his sons and others. Thornhill being intimate with Huggins and aspiring to honour and ambitions—greatly—got Huggins to propose to Lord Sunderland to get Thornhill knighted by the King and make him his history painter—which that nobleman did."

In Walpole's sketch of Thornhill's career nothing is said of him in connection with Canons, that Middlesex palace of the Duke of Chandos which was both built and destroyed within a period of little more than thirty years. But Vertue, who visited Canons in its prime, describes Thornhill's paintings as features of its decoration; and mentions with them some of the family portraits then hanging in the house of whose grandeur and costliness so many stories are told. The portraits included those of "the great-grandfather of the Duke of Chandos, the face very natural (tho' manner stiff); the Duke's father, wig on and whiskers; his grandfather a half length, Vandyck or a good copy;

several of his relations, etc.; his own picture, his first Lady, his sons and a daughter, by Sir Godfrey Kneller; the Duchess of Buckingham in black, sitting with children by her, the Duke's picture hung up above. Supposed to be done after his death. This either by Vandyck or after him—more likely Mytens." Vertue writes in the margin, "After Mytens at Minchenden." He does not specify any portrait as by Thornhill, but notes his painting of the staircase and ceiling. It is curious that a bust of Oliver Cromwell was among the many works of art that adorned the rooms.

Thornhill is said to have disapproved of his daughter's marriage to Hogarth, but the two men afterwards became the best of friends, and were living in the same house at Covent Garden when the subscriptions were received for the prints of *The Harlot's Progress*. They had a common enemy in William Kent, the supposed universal genius who was the fellow-student of Hogarth at St. Martin's Lane. Kent, who held more than one Royal appointment and was a member of the household of the art-loving Lord Burlington, was on bad terms with Thornhill, and is supposed to have made mischief between that artist and one of his patrons, Mr. Styles of Moor Park, which ended in a lawsuit. Perhaps the trouble between Thornhill and Kent was responsible for some of Hogarth's attacks upon the latter, of whom that satirist once declared that "neither England nor Italy ever produced a more contemptible dauber." But Kent if a poor artist was a man whose civil and obliging behaviour made him many friends among great people, and he was able to retaliate upon Hogarth with the most damaging effect on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Royal, George the Second's daughter, with the Prince of Orange.

This wedding, on the 14th of March, 1734, was that magnificent ceremony of which Lord Hervey has given us a striking, and in some respects, pathetic description. The bridegroom was the deformed Prince of Orange whose shape and figure terrified the Queen when she saw him for the first time and realized to what manner of man her daughter was to be given. The days that immediately preceded the wedding were passed by the younger Princesses in weeping over their elder sister and commiserating her fate; and Lord Hervey, who as Vice-Chamberlain had charge of the ceremonial, describes the procession from the Palace to the French chapel, in which all the Peers took

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part, as more like the mournful pomp of a sacrifice than the joyful celebration of a marriage.

The Prince of Orange, who although he had been badly treated by the Royal Family, had bestowed splendid gifts upon the bride, was dressed with so much care, with a long peruke hiding his back and shoulders, that he looked "a less shocking and ridiculous figure in this pompous procession than one could naturally have expected from such an Esop." But the Vice-Chamberlain draws a terrible picture of this unfortunate Prince as he saw him later in a dressing-gown and without the peruke; when, Lord Hervey says, he looked from behind as if he had no head and from before as if he had no neck and no legs. Yet misshapen as he was his bride paid every attention to him and treated him as if he were an Adonis.

A vast amount of public interest was excited by this wedding, and on the night of the 14th of March half the people of London were in the streets, watching the illuminations and the bonfires that flamed at every corner, and listening to the incessant pealing of the bells and the salutes fired by the Tower batteries and the guns on the ships in the river. The marriage was celebrated in the evening and great pains had been taken to make the lighting as well as the decoration of the Chapel effective; and Hogarth, alive to the fact that the scene would offer a fine subject for his pencil, and for a popular engraving, had approached Queen Caroline beforehand and obtained her permission to be present and to make a sketch.

But he had reckoned without Kent, who as Royal Painter and Master Carpenter had designed the decorations of the Chapel and proposed himself to publish a print illustrating this historic event. The Queen, unfortunately, had omitted to tell Kent of the permission she had given, and when Hogarth commenced to draw he was challenged by one of the Master Carpenter's staff and told to desist. The artist pleaded the Queen's permission and declined to budge, until the Lord Chamberlain in person ordered him to be turned out of the building and forbade him to pursue his plan of making a picture of the ceremony. Turned out he was, and the appeal of the indignant artist to the Queen resulted in nothing but an admission that she had given the permission to sketch without reflection, and that she would not have done so had she thought it would interfere with the rights or profits of Mr. Kent.

Hogarth's complaints of his treatment were loud and long, not only on account of Kent's interference with the sketch of the wedding but because the trouble connected with that incident had put an end to another scheme. He had received a command to paint a picture, presumably a "conversation piece," of all the Royal Family. The design for it had been made and a sitting given to him by Prince William, afterwards the Duke of Cumberland and the victor at Culloden.

"This also has been stopp'd," writes Vertue, "so that he can't proceed, and these are sad mortifications to an ingenious man. But it's the effect of caricatures with which he has heretofore touch't Mr. Kent and diverted the town—which now he is like to pay for when he has least thought on it. Add to that there is some other causes relating to Sir James Thornhill, whose daughter is married to Mr. Hogarth, and is blended with interest and the spirit of opposition. Hogarth has so far lost the advantage of drawing from the life that he owns he has no employment that way; but has mighty encouragement from the subscriptions for those designs of inventions he does—prodigious for likeness, character—so ready—beyond all others."

Another of Vertue's early notes on Hogarth is worth mentioning here although it is unconcerned with his work or character. We all know that his stature was below the average, but Vertue writing in 1733, shows that he was very small indeed. "I observe that the most elevated men in art are the least in stature, particularly Mr. Zincke, enameller; Mr. Hogarth, painter; Mr. Philips, Junior, painter; Mr. Scott, sea-painter; Mr. P. Scheemaker, sculptor; (and his brother less) Mr. Isler (?) modeller in wax; Mr. Worsdale, painter. These gents are five feet men or less."

Although the marriage of the Princess Royal brought disappointment to Hogarth many commissions were given to other artists to paint the bride and bridegroom, who remained in England for some time after the wedding. Their departure was delayed too long for the pleasure of George the Second, for the bridegroom was extremely popular in London despite his physical imperfections, and when he and his father-in-law went together to the theatre the Prince of Orange was cheered by the mob and the King almost neglected.

One of the painters to whom the wedding brought commis-

sions was the Dutchman, Vandermyrn, whose careful work had brought him the patronage of both the Georges, First and Second. About a month after the ceremony the Prince of Orange called at the studio of his countryman, who lived in Princes Street, Cavendish Square, and found Vandermyrn's portraits so much to his taste that he commanded him to attend the next day at St. James's Palace. There he painted a whole length of the Prince of Orange in his Garter robes, which he accomplished satisfactorily, and another commission was given to him to paint the Prince of Wales. One of the sittings of the Prince of Wales was followed by a curious incident of which a description—or supposed description—supplied by Vandermyrn, was published in the newspapers. In this it was asserted that after the sitting the Prince of Wales asked his sister the Princess of Orange to draw Vandermyrn's portrait:—

“This her Royal Highness condescended to do, with an affability and care which charmed all present, and with so delicate and masterly execution, and so very like that it strikes all who see it with admiration. Nor is this great honour, which no painter could boast of a hand so noble, the only mark of the goodness of the Royal Family towards this artist, since his late Majesty, and both their present Majesties were pleased to stand godfathers and godmothers by proxy to Mr. Vandermyrn's son George.”

This advertisement, for it was nothing else, was read with astonishment by Vandermyrn's fellow-artists, of whom none was so surprised as Philip Mercier the portrait painter to the Prince of Wales. Mercier, a Page of the Bedchamber and a member of the Prince's household, was an artist of French extraction who had taught the Princess of Orange to draw. He knew well that the Princess had never painted from the life and that it was impossible that Vandermyrn's story could be true. Its falsity was soon proved when Mercier found an opportunity to speak with his former pupil. The Princess told him the real story; that when Vandermyrn was painting the Prince of Wales he produced a portrait of himself, unfinished and done so far, as he said, by his young son. This portrait he submitted to the Princess for her judgment and correction, and said that if she would only touch it with the brush he should regard it as a great honour done to his art and to his family. The Princess, who had no experience in portraiture, was embarrassed by this request.

But, she said, the man was importunate and she therefore took a brush in her hand—a brush with no colour in it—and just touched the surface of the canvas. “If it be such an honour as you think,” she told Vandermyrn, “you may say that I have touched it with the pencil, but the picture is never the better for it.”

Although the bride of the Prince of Orange may never have painted from the life, as Mercier declares, she had some skill as a copyist, for at a Court held in the year of her marriage four works from her brush were placed on view by the Queen’s order. They were after Vandyck, Titian and Carlo Maratti, and, in the opinion of a friendly critic who saw them, “as well done, as I believe, as any painter in London could have finished them.”

The portrait which Vandermyrn declared to be the work of the Princess is in the Harcourt collection at Nuneham, and is thus described in the catalogue:—

“No. 126. *Vandermyrn, painter to the Prince of Orange*. Upon the stretching frame is the following inscription. ‘The face was done by H.R.H. Princess of Orange, soon after her marriage, while the painter was attending at St. James’s to take the pictures of the said Prince and Princess on that happy occasion. He parted with it just before his death, which happened in February, 1741, to Mrs. Clare of Soho Square, London. All but the face was done by himself. The Princess was a good painter and did it with great grace and condescension.’”

Philip Mercier painted the portrait of the Princess soon after his exposure of Vandermyrn, and remained in the employment of the Prince of Wales until three years after the Orange marriage. The Prince then dismissed him and he opened a studio in Covent Garden where he practised for a time with some success, painting portraits both single and in groups; as well as subject pictures, “well done and much approved of.” The French artist, whose work was influenced by that of Watteau, afterwards settled in York, where he lived and prospered for many years, occasionally bringing to London pictures for which he appears to have found a ready market. Vertue records that in 1747 Mercier “brought to town five pieces of paintings about five feet square each, representing the Seasons or Times—the beauty and air of the women’s faces, dresses, etc., well and masterly drawn. These he

soon disposed of here and sold for £100 and immediately soon returned back to Yorkshire."

George the Second is commonly supposed to have despised painting equally with poetry, but contemporary records show that he and his family were constant patrons of artists; and the King, as we have seen, interested himself when Prince of Wales with the affairs of the Academy in St. Martin's Lane. England in his reign was a paradise for foreign painters; and whether French, German, Swedish or Italian, there were few of them who failed to obtain some kind of Royal commission. George Frederick Zincke, the German miniaturist and enameller, was a particular favourite of George the Second. Zincke, who lived in the Piazza, Covent Garden, had gained a high reputation in the reign of George the First, when it was said that he had more people of distinction sitting to him than any other artist in the country. A portrait of George the Second, painted early in his reign, pleased that monarch beyond measure. He ordered a number of replicas of it and offered to take Zincke into his service if he would agree to give up his public practice.

"I should like," said the King, "that you should employ all your time in pictures for me. I will take them all." He told Zincke how he had suffered at the hands of Bryan, to whom he had sat in Hanover, at the particular request of the British residents of that city. The portrait, he said, was intolerably bad and not in the least like him; and he had made up his mind to have the Garter and George rubbed out and to give the canvas to his valet.

Bryan's portrait was, perhaps, too truthful for George the Second, who had the common failing of wishing to appear in pictures younger and better looking than he was in life. Zincke, an able and hardworking man whose head had remained unturned by his singular prosperity, possessed a quiet sense of humour, and he told some of his brother artists what happened on one occasion when the King and Queen sat to him for their portraits, at a time when both their Majesties were fifty or thereabouts. Zincke said that the Queen advised him privately to be sure to make the King look young—not more than twenty-five—while the King on his part hinted to the painter that her Majesty must have the appearance of twenty-eight at the outside. "These courtesies," says Vertue, "will be a mystery to posterity, who sees them thus depicted without knowing the reason."

Caroline's taste was better than that of her consort, as she showed by her appreciation of the famous drawings of heads by Holbein, formerly in the collection of James the Second, which, in 1727 or 1728, she discovered by accident in the Library at Kensington Palace. Walpole, who based his information on a note of Vertue's, tells us only that the Queen found them in a bureau. "How they came there is quite unknown," he says, but their presence at Kensington appears to be explained by a passage in the diary of the first Lord Egmont, who, as he was interested in pictures and on friendly terms with Queen Caroline, is likely to have been better informed than Vertue on this subject. Writing in August, 1735, Lord Egmont says that he has just visited the Royal Palace at Richmond, where he saw the Holbein heads (then framed and glazed) decorating the walls of one of the Queen's private apartments. "The Queen," he tells us, "found them neglected in a book, shut up in a common table drawer saved out of the fire at Whitehall; it is a pity they are not graved by some good master." It is known that most of the pictures and some furniture were saved when Whitehall was burnt in 1698; and the table whose drawer contained the book of Holbein drawings was no doubt conveyed with other things to Kensington Palace, less than three miles distant.

Lord Egmont went to Court soon after his visit to Richmond, and when talking to the Queen about his collection of prints "took the occasion to tell her how much the public would be obliged to her if she would allow her fine collection of Holbein heads to be engraved. She answered she was inclined enough to it, but we had no good engravers, and besides they might be spoilt, and she did not love the public enough to have them spoilt." Vertue, however, managed to obtain permission to trace many of them. But he abandoned the idea of reproduction, and the heads were not engraved until many years after the death of Caroline.

It was impossible for a Queen who admired Holbein to sympathize with the feeble work of Charles Jervas, her husband's Principal Painter, and it will be seen later in this chapter that a visit of Caroline to the studio of Jervas was speedily followed by his loss of Royal favour. Jervas, whose full lengths of George the Second and his Queen still hang in the Guildhall, would have been forgotten long ago but for the eulogies of Pope and the reply of Sir Joshua Reynolds when he was asked why the por-

traits by his predecessor had vanished:—"They are all in the garrets now"; an expression which suggests that Sir Joshua had read Walpole's sketch of the life of Jervas in the *Anecdotes of Painting in England*.

"Carlo Jervasi," as he was known in Rome, where he admitted that he had begun to study art at the wrong end, was born in Ireland, and was fortunate enough in his youth to obtain the support of a man with some little influence at Court. This was Norrice, the picture-keeper and framemaker to William and Mary; and Norrice in the free and easy custom of that day, allowed Jervas to borrow from the Royal collection any picture he wanted to copy. Jervas was a feeble painter, as we can see from such of his works as have survived, and even in the heyday of his prosperity he was the subject of severe criticism. To the eyes of Vertue his portraits appeared "like fan-painting—fine silks, fair flesh, white and red of beautiful colours, but no blood in them or natural heat or warmth—much a mannerist."

Yet Jervas, like Kneller and others of his profession in that depressing period of the arts, found admirers and flatterers among the most brilliant of English men of letters. Pope, who seemed fated to glorify bad painters and was a dabbler himself, was the pupil of Jervas. The poet loved to handle the brush, and spoilt many canvases if his own amusnig account of his experiences may be trusted. Writing to Gay in August, 1713, he says in connection with his studies under Jervas:—

"Every day the performances of others appear more beautiful and excellent—and my own more despicable. I have thrown away three Dr. Swifts, each of which was once my vanity, two Lady Bridgwaters, a Duchess of Montague, besides half a dozen Earls and one Knight of the Garter. I have crucified Christ over again in effigy, and made a Madonna as old as her mother, St. Anne. Nay, what is yet more miraculous I have rivalled St. Luke himself in painting; and as it is said an angel came and finished his piece so you would swear a devil put the last hand to mine, it is so begrimed and smuttred. However, I comfort myself with a Christian reflection, that I have not broken the commandment; for my pictures are not the likeness of anything in heaven above, or in earth below, or in the water under the earth."

Although Pope's eyes were weak he worked with Jervas for a year and a half. Spence in his *Anecdotes* implies that his affec-

tions were equally divided between painting and poetry and recalls the glee with which, in the temporary absence of the artist, he once added a few strokes to a picture Tillemans was executing for Lord Radnor. One of Pope's biographers, Owen Ruffhead, writing in 1769, declares that he made considerable progress under Jervas and as a proof cites a portrait by him of Betterton the actor, then in the possession of Lord Mansfield. When Lord Mansfield's house in Bloomsbury was burnt by the mob in the riots of 1780 it was rumoured in London that this portrait had been destroyed. Malone, writing to Lord Charlemont two or three weeks after the riots, mentions it as one of the few things of value Lord Mansfield had lost by the fire; and there is a reference to its supposed destruction in an interesting letter to Richard Gough, written in 1784 by the Somerset Herald, John Charles Brooke. Describing some pictures he had seen recently in a visit to the West of England, Brooke says that he noticed at Holme Lacy, "a head of Vandyck, drawn by Pope in red and black chalk, finely executed. Have you heard of any other works of his in that way, extant, since his portrait of Betterton was burnt at Lord Mansfield's?" Dr. Johnson, too, evidently thought that it was burnt, as in his memoir of Pope published in 1781 he mentions, "a portrait of Betterton, supposed to be drawn by Pope, that was in the possession of Lord Mansfield."

This passage is quoted in a newspaper of 1781 in a comment on Johnson's book. The writer marks the "was" with an asterisk, and says:—"Is in possession of the nobleman at his villa in Caen Wood, and is hung in the same room and by way of companion to Dance's fine portrait of Garrick." The portrait, no doubt, had been removed before the riots to Lord Mansfield's country house at Hampstead, Caen Wood, or Ken Wood as we call it to-day. It is mentioned again as at Caen Wood in 1785 by the art critic of the *Morning Chronicle* who, however, states that it is the work of Jervas, although "said to be by Alexander Pope."

By whomsoever painted it seems certain that it is not an original but a copy of Kneller's portrait of Betterton, as William Seward states in a note on Pope written in 1795. It has always remained in the possession of Lord Mansfield's family, and in 1867 was lent by the grandfather of the present Earl to the Exhibition of National Portraits, at South Kensington, where it was No. 61 in the catalogue, and described as a bust portrait,

"dark dress, long fair wig, showing right hand." Close to it was hanging a portrait of Betterton by Kneller, lent by Countess De La Warr and identical in size and arrangement, "No. 67. Bust to the right, showing right hand, full dark wig." Against No. 67, H. B. Wheatley, whose catalogue of the exhibition I have, has written "The original of No. 61."

The idea that this copy was made by Pope appears to be based only on tradition, and the fact that the wig is fair in the copy and dark in the original suggests that it was perhaps painted by a hand more expert than that of the poet. Sir Joshua described Pope's painting of a fan as "like the performance of a child" and it is unlikely that an artist so little skilled could transpose the colour of the wig from dark to fair. But the transposition would have been easy for Pope's master, Jervas, to whom Lord Mansfield's portrait was attributed in 1785 by the critic of the *Morning Chronicle*.

Pope, as we have seen, laughed at his own attempts at painting, but he spoke of the pictures by Jervas as the work of a master certain of enduring fame. When Jervas was away, painting in Ireland, Pope wrote to implore him soon to return to London. "Everybody here," said the poet, "has great need of you. Come then, having peopled Ireland with a world of beautiful shadows, come to us." In the same letter Pope tells Jervas that he has recently visited Oxford:—"where your name is mentioned with honour. I saw there, and revered, some of your first pieces, which painters will look upon as we poets do the Culex of Virgil and the Batrochom of Homer." It is not surprising that flattery such as this made Jervas believe, as Walpole hints, that he was superior to Titian. But Jervas must have had qualities of some kind, or such men as Swift, Addison and Pope could not have tolerated, much less sought, his society as they did. It may be that the literary qualities of Jervas appealed to them, for he is said to have been a man of letters, and certainly published an English version of *Don Quixote*.

In the same year, 1732, that Zincke produced his flatteringly youthful portraits of George the Second and his Queen, Jervas also had sittings from their Majesties. At this time his reputation was still considerable, for Vertue mentions him with Richardson and Dahl as the three foremost painters of the time, "the Old Masters" as he calls them. It is interesting to note the names of the twelve men whom he placed in the second rank, as "those

(generally) that studied in the Academy here under Sir Godfrey Kneller, Cheron, Laguerre and Thornhill." Vertue gives them in the following order:—

Mr. Gibson

Mr. Vanderbank

Mr. Huyssing

Mr. Highmore

Mr. Dandridge

Mr. Smibert—abroad, in Boston, New England.

Mr. Hogarth—small figures

Two Zeemans (brothers, did not study at the Academy)

Mr. Joseph Goupy, water-colour

Mr. Bernard Lens, water-colour

Mr. Fred Zincke, enameller.

With the painting by Jervas of the above-mentioned portraits of the King and Queen his popularity began to decline, for they were failures in the eyes of the Royal pair and his position at Court suffered in consequence. The Irish painter lacked the art of making his sitters appear young, or "beautiful and like," as George the Second said of Zincke's miniature of himself; and when Queen Caroline visited Jervas's house in Cleveland Court to see the portraits of her husband and herself, she passed them by in silence.

Her Majesty, who had driven from Kensington Palace to Cleveland Court attended by a gay train of lords and ladies, proceeded from the house of Jervas to that of John Wootton, the painter of horses and sporting subjects, who lived in Cavendish Square where he had lately built in his garden "a large, noble painting room." In Wootton's new studio an equestrian portrait of the King awaited Queen Caroline's inspection. The grey horse, the figure of the King and the background were the work of Wootton and were praised highly by her Majesty and the courtiers. But the face of the King in this portrait was painted by Jervas; and the face "was not thought to be like, and was much spoke against." This was another disappointment for the portrait painter, whose commissions forthwith decreased until there was so little to do at Cleveland Court that he and his assistants spent most of their time making copies of pictures, numbers of which were disposed of in the sale that followed the death of Jervas in 1739.

The copies, numerous as they were, formed but a small portion of the enormous mass of paintings, drawings and studies of all

kinds that had been accumulated by the Court painter. Some of them were rubbish, although ascribed to eminent artists, but Vertue says there were many good things among the 2,275 lots (some of them composed of thirty or forty items) which were disposed of by Cock the auctioneer in the spring of 1740. The catalogue of seventy-six pages of small type was drawn up by Jervas himself, not long before his death, and the sale of his collection lasted twenty-five days. Jervas's studio properties were also sold, and included thirty lots of ultramarine, then as now, the most valuable of pigments, and more than eleven hundred paint brushes. Jervas seems to have been as fond of brushes as was Sir Thomas Lawrence, whose studio contained seventeen hundred at the time of his death. There seems to be no reason why either painter should have accumulated such vast numbers of tools, except that in the case of Lawrence there is a tradition that he always worked with new brushes.

Walpole in the contemptuous article on Jervas in the *Anecdotes of Painting in England* says that Vertue took so little notice of the career of the Court painter that he did not even take the trouble to record the date of his death. But Walpole was mistaken, for in one of his diaries for 1739 the careful Vertue makes the following entry. "Saturday, Nov. 2. died at his house at Cleveland Court near St. James's, Charles Jervas Esq., Principal Painter to his Majesty—his place and salary £200 a year—who will have it?" Vertue's question was soon answered by the appointment to the post of Principal Painter to the King of an artist at least as incompetent as Jervas. This was Hogarth's enemy, William Kent, who if he possessed some skill in architecture, certainly was no painter. Such an unfortunate appointment could not fail to arouse sarcastic comments, among which were the following verses, ascribed by some to Lord Chesterfield:—

"As to Apelles, Ammon's son
Would only deign to sit,
So to thy pencil, Kent, alone
Will George his form submit.

Equal your envied honours, save
This difference still we see:
One would no other painter have,
None other would have thee."

However, the King does not appear to have sat to his Principal Painter for any portraits and the comparison between George the Second and Kent, and Alexander and Apelles, is therefore imperfect. But the King continued to sit to other artists; and was painted by some to whom he gave no sittings. One of these was Joseph Highmore, of whom Vertue writes, in connection with his earliest portraits of Royalty:—

“The desire of being great in public reputation puts some men on designs that are false impositions, as in such case Mr. Highmore; who as he could not obtain the favour of the King or Queen sitting to him for their pictures did by stealth draw them first on paper in different views. Afterwards by memory in some parts, and copying those portraits before painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller he made two pictures which he thought to be more like their Majesties than others done before. This in time to come may explain how these two prints came to be marked ‘Highmore, pinxit.’”

The reason why Highmore painted these pictures of the King and Queen and afterwards had them engraved is made clear by Rouquet, the Swiss miniature painter and enameller, who then lived in England. Rouquet in his little book, *L'État des Arts en Angleterre*, points out that the work of English engravers was at this time almost entirely confined to portraiture, and that the large number of portraits reproduced was due to the fact that this practice afforded painters a means of advertisement that they could obtain in no other way, as there were no exhibitions in London in the first half of the eighteenth century.

“Painters,” says Rouquet, “of some reputation, as well as those who are not at all famous, seek equally to become celebrated by using this medium; they have one or more of their portraits engraved in this way under all kinds of pretexts, but their real motive is to attach their names to the prints. The name of the painter appears under the picture, and he sees it with pleasure when he looks into the shop window of the print sellers. It is a public acknowledgement of his existence which perhaps might be obscure otherwise, and he does not expect more of it than that.”

Joseph Highmore, who was afterwards one of the most successful portrait painters of his time, and whose work is attracting more attention to-day than it did a generation ago, joined Kneller's Academy in the third year of its existence. Educated at

the Merchant Taylors School, as its late Head Master, Dr. J. A. Nairn, discovered recently, he was brought up to the law, and Sir Godfrey always spoke of him as "the young lawyer," probably because his legal training had left its mark upon his manner. Vertue, who was his fellow-student, says of him that "the natural practice of the law gives most men a good, voluble speech with a steadfast assurance, of which he has benefited." He hints that Highmore had rather too much assurance but credits him with "sober conduct, a good education, a resolute mind to overcome difficulties, a free judgment not vitiated by mannerists, and a continual observation of nature." Highmore had one quality that was then rare. Like Gainsborough he painted everything himself and was independent of drapery men at a time when most artists in portraiture were compelled to employ them. He endeavoured in his portraits to complete the face at one sitting and without retouching; and it is mentioned as remarkable that the hands of all his sitters were painted from the life.

Painting apart, Highmore was a well-informed man of literary tastes, with a fund of anecdote of which Walpole availed himself when writing his biography of Kneller. Several of the amusing stories of Sir Godfrey told in the *Anecdotes of Painting in England* were obtained from Highmore, to whom also we owe the description of the narrow escape of Sir James Thornhill when he was decorating the cupola of St. Paul's Cathedral. Thornhill, who was painting on an unfenced scaffold, was stepping backwards to its very verge and must have fallen, had not a companion, by seizing a large brush and smearing the just-finished face of an Apostle, compelled him to rush forward to save his work. Highmore does not identify the person whose singular presence of mind saved the artist, but another authority gives his name as Bentley French and says he was one of Thornhill's footmen.

It has been claimed by Highmore's friends that he was the only artist who painted an original portrait of General Wolfe, who sat to him in 1745 when the famous commander was a youth of nineteen.

A correspondent of Dr. Johnson and Isaac Watts, Highmore enjoyed the intimate friendship of Samuel Richardson, whose acquaintance he made through painting some pictures illustrating the author's novel *Pamela*. Richardson says in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh:—

"Mr. Highmore is an eminent painter in Holborn Row,

Lincoln's Inn Fields, the same who published twelve prints of *Pamela* of which he has the drawings, and which he had finished before I had the pleasure of knowing him. He has drawn *Clarissa* at whole length and in the Vandyck taste and dress. He had finished the piece before I saw it or knew of it, and before *Clarissa* was printed, having seen only some parts of the work in manuscript. His own imagination was his principal guide, and he has given it great intelligence, sweetness and dignity. As you propose to see it I will say no more of it. Mr. Highmore has also drawn the assembled Harlowes, the accusing brother and the accused sister, on her return from Miss Howes's in the beginning of vol. I."

Of Highmore's *Clarissa*, Richardson says that her innocent aspect "made me ready to curse the *Lovelace* I had drawn." The twelve pictures illustrating *Pamela* made their appearance at Christie's in 1920 catalogued as the work of a Dutch artist, Troost, and were sold for 820 guineas. They were soon identified as Highmore's, and the set was broken up and distributed among various collections, the National Gallery acquiring four. The separation, perhaps unavoidable, was unfortunate. For the artist, when he exhibited the twelve canvases in 1744, was most anxious that they should be seen and considered together "as representing the most remarkable adventures of *Pamela*; in which he has endeavoured to comprehend her whole story as well as to preserve a connection between the several pictures, which follow each other as parts successive and dependent, so as to complete the subject."

Richardson introduced Highmore to Dr. Young, and the author of *Night Thoughts* on one occasion begged for the advice of the artist about some of his pictures. Young, writing to Richardson on March 19th, 1750, says:—"I am distressed in a point which I am almost ashamed to own. I have some excellent landscapes which I ordered to be cleaned, and they have in my absence varnished them, which will spoil my pictures. When you see your friend Mr. Heymore I beg you to ask if any art can take off the varnish and rescue my pictures from ruin? Or, if it can't be got off if anything can prevent the mischief of its cracking the paint?" We are not told whether Highmore's advice was able to save the landscapes, but that his acquaintance continued with, and was valued by, Young is shown by a letter of Richardson's written four years later:—

"To Mr. Highmore.

DEAR SIR,

I have obtained from Dr. Young what none of his friends have hitherto been able to obtain—that he will sit to the pencil. The pleasure he has received this evening at your house, and particularly in your conversation, has greatly contributed to his assent. The piece is to be mine, and I shall put a just value upon it. It will be most suitable to the place I design to fill if it be a head only, not an half length. Be pleased to give me your time, the sooner the better, lest he should change his mind or not stay in town long enough to have it finished. He insists on my attending him and thinks he shall not have patience to sit it out.

I am, Sir,

Yours and your young lady's

Most obedient Servt.

S. RICHARDSON.

Tuesday night."

This portrait, which shows Young wearing bands and a black gown, is now at All Souls College, Oxford, and is probably the only one for which he ever sat. Highmore's son, himself an artist, always declared that this was the case, and that the vignettes published with some editions of Young's poems are merely "imagined countenances." Richardson's letter shows that he commissioned the portrait, for which, however, Young paid. He insisted on presenting it to Richardson, who acknowledged the gift—gratefully but with vehement protests—in December, 1754, soon after the last sitting.

The friendship between the painter and the novelist was maintained until the end of Richardson's life. Highmore was at Richardson's country house at Fulham when his friend was attacked by an illness that proved fatal, as he tells his daughter in a letter of July 1st, 1761:—

"I went in the afternoon to drink tea with him. After he had drunk one dish or two, Mrs. Smith brought him another. He would not or could not drink it, and immediately faltered in his speech and from that time spoke no more articulately. He continued speaking, or rather trying to speak, but no one could understand one word distinctly. Dr. Heberden was then

sent for and has attended him ever since; and John brought me word yesterday that he has no hopes of his recovery."

Although his case was hopeless the stricken man rallied a little. Dr. Birch says, writing to Lord Royston on July 4th:—"Mr. Samuel Richardson was living yesterday, and so far recovered as to know Dr. Heberden, and to be able to speak a few words and to receive a little sustenance and physic, which he had not done since he was first seized with the palsy, or rather apoplexy, on Sunday evening last." Dr. Birch left this letter unfinished, to go out on some business, and in a postscript written later says that Richardson is dead and that as he passed through Fleet Street the bell of St. Bride's Church was tolling for him.

When Highmore produced the portraits of the King and Queen that Vertue implies were engraved for the sake of advertisement, Thomas Hudson, afterwards the master of Reynolds, had just been commissioned by Chief Justice Willes to paint a whole length of George the Second for the Court of Common Pleas—the whole length that is now in the National Portrait Gallery. But the King would give Hudson no sittings and he, like Highmore, was obliged to obtain the material for his portrait from other sources. George the Second seems to have preferred portraits on the miniature scale of those produced by his favourite Zincke, for he sat readily enough to Isaac Gosset, who "in a composition that imitates ivory," to use the artist's own words, modelled small reliefs of heads and busts in profile. Gosset, some of whose work is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, modelled most of the family of George the Second.

In December, 1737, a fashionable French portrait painter arrived in London and set up his studio in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, at the Crown and Ring, the house of his countryman, Duhamel the jeweller. The new-comer, Jean Baptist Vanloo, brother to the better-known historical painter, Carlo Vanloo, was not warmly welcomed by the other members of the profession, English or foreign, for his reputation abroad was high and it was foreseen that he might carry off some of their business, which indeed proved to be the case. Hogarth says that Vanloo came here simply to make money because he had been told that the English were to be cajoled by anyone who had sufficient assurance, but Vertue tells another story. According to him, Vanloo, who had plenty of employment in France, left his country owing to some personal disappointment or

trouble, that he came here without any invitation, or introductions to important people; and that to show his skill he painted first the portraits of Owen McSwiney (who had now returned from Venice and was living in London) and Colley Cibber. The portraits of Cibber and McSwiney, and still more that of General Dormer, which was painted immediately after the others, made the Frenchman's work popular, and in three months he had more commissions than he could execute.

Hogarth declares that his arrival ruined, and brought to distress and poverty, several men who before were highly popular, but this is a characteristic exaggeration. Certainly Vanloo's success was great, but portrait painting was the fashion in 1738 and there were commissions enough in London to occupy many artists. One proof of this is the fact that the Florentine, Soldi, who had been living in England for some years, painted thirty portraits, large and small, between the months of April and August, 1738.

Vanloo, when he came to London from Paris at the end of 1737, was no longer young. He was then about fifty-five and experienced in the ways of the world; a man—"tall, well-shaped and of good aspect," who had travelled far and knew how to entertain his sitters with stories of the Courts of other countries, especially of Poland, where he had found a friend in King Stanislas. This monarch, he said, was so free from the restrictions of etiquette and so fond of smoking that he and the painter enjoyed their pipes together all the time his Majesty's portrait was in progress. Walpole describes Vanloo as a laborious painter who demanded five sittings from each person who came to him, but this statement is based on a misreading of the original note of Vertue, who says that the Frenchman was so busy that he had daily "five sittings for to paint faces of persons." He meant, of course, that Vanloo had five sitters each day, not five sittings for each person—though even that would not prove that the artist was "laborious."

He made many friends in England and among them was Horace Walpole's father, then Prime Minister, who sat to him soon after the death of Jervas, the King's painter. Vanloo in talking afterwards about these sittings said that Sir Robert Walpole paid him many compliments, and declared that he would have appointed him King's painter in the place of Jervas had it not been for an Act of Parliament that prohibited foreigners

from enjoying places of salary in the Government. As we have seen, the successor of Jervas was Kent, the jack-of-all-trades of the arts and the factotum of that architect-Peer, the Earl of Burlington. Kent's patron was also the friend of Vanloo, who painted a family group in which the Earl, his Countess, and their daughters were shown, engaged together in the practice of the polite arts.

Vertue, who saw the picture at Burlington House and was impressed by its technical merits, says of it:—"The noble Lord is sitting at a table, leaning on it, a portcrayon in his hand; some draughts, and papers lying by them. The Lady is sitting, richly dressed in a brocade flower'd silk, a pallet of oil colours in her left hand, she is giving it to a blackmore behind her as if she had done with it. The eldest daughter stands behind with a book in her hand, shut. The younger daughter has a music book which she opens on her mother's lap." Vertue adds, slyly, "Thus they are all disposed in the virtuosi way." Lady Burlington, who studied painting under Kent, appears to have been accomplished for an amateur. She is the only woman artist of the period of whom Vertue takes much notice except Mrs. Hoadly.

The story of Sarah Hoadly, born Curtis, is a romance as Vertue tells it. A pupil of the well-known painter, Mary Beale, she adopted portraiture as a profession and was in practice on her own account for some time before the death of her teacher. But she was poor and was subsisting with difficulty when a chance acquaintanceship revolutionized her life. "She happened," says Vertue, "to have a lodging in a house near Covent Garden, up two pairs of stairs; and on the one pair of stairs lodged the two sisters of the Rev. Mr. Hoadly, they were mantua-makers. By this means came their first meeting and afterwards her marriage with Mr. Hoadly."

Sarah Curtis little thought when she was married to Mr. Hoadly that her union with the young clergyman was to lead her from the humble lodging above the mantua-makers, step by step to a Bishop's palace. But her husband was no ordinary person, and this "great and good man," as Walpole describes him, after being appointed Bishop of Bangor by George the First, was promoted successively to the sees of Hereford and Salisbury, and finally to that of Winchester—one of the most important prelacies of the English Church. "Whereby his lady was at liberty to practice the art or leave it just as her affections inclined

her; therefore after the good fortune she painted the features only of intimates or friends." A half length of Bishop Hoadly, painted by his wife, is in the National Portrait Gallery. There is a tradition that it was touched upon by Hogarth, who was the close friend of Chancellor Hoadly, the Bishop's son.

Vanloo remained in England for two or three years after painting the group of the Burlington family, but the climate tried his health severely. He suffered from a complication of dropsy, gout and rheumatism, which, although relieved for a time by Dr. Ward's pills, ultimately threatened such grave consequences that he was advised, as the only chance of recovery, to try the effect of the air of Provence, his native place. In his last year in England he was obliged to decline all new commissions and his time was occupied principally in finishing portraits already commenced, including whole lengths of the Prince and Princess of Wales, painted in their robes of State for Pulteney, Earl of Bath.

Others he left to be completed by his drapery men, of whose skill he availed himself in common with the majority of the portrait painters of his day. Most of these—at least in England—were, to use the current expression, merely "face-painters," or as old Parmentier used to call them "phiz mongers," and unable to execute the draperies and accessories of their pictures. Hogarth, like Highmore, could carry his work through without assistance. But Hogarth was not at this time popular as a portrait painter and obtained few commissions, and this added to the bitterness with which he caricatured his successful rivals lamenting in a body at the funeral of Vanaken the drapery painter, who had been their prop and stay. In fact, Vanaken's share of the work had been so considerable that all their paintings resembled one another. Vertue remarks this peculiarity; and the similarity of the portraits by English painters at this time is the subject of some unflattering comments by the Abbé Le Blanc, an observant French writer who lived in England from 1737 to about 1744.

When the Abbé arrived in this country Kneller had been dead fourteen years, but his fame was still great among our portrait painters, and his influence powerful. This was surprising to Le Blanc, who in some letters on the general condition of England, written to his friend the Abbé du Bos, ridicules alike the master and his followers. Le Blanc, whose statements about the success of Vanloo are as exaggerated as those of Hogarth, says that there

are no English portrait painters of distinction, and that they all practise their art as a trade, simply to make money:—

“As for Sir Godfrey Kneller, whom the English nation adopted, though he has a fine monument in Westminster Abbey, though Mr. Dryden celebrated him and Mr. Pope translated and applied to him the famous Latin epitaph of Raphael, yet you might justly blame me if I attributed to this German any other merit than his good sense to settle in England, the only country where he would have been called a painter. At present in London the portrait painters are more numerous and more unskilful than ever they were. Since Vanloo came hither they have in vain attempted to cry him down, for nobody now has a portrait painted except by him. I have been with some of the most famous of them. At a distance one would take a dozen of their portraits for twelve copies of the same original. Some have their heads turned to the left side; some to the right, that is all the difference between them. Excepting the single countenance or likeness they have all the same neck, the same arms, the same colouring, and the same attitude. In short these pretended portraits are as void of life and action as of design in the painter.”

Vertue's revelations of the incapacity of most of the English portrait painters of this time are astonishing, and show that even country artists had recourse to the all-providing Vanaken. For example, Hamlet Winstanley, the pupil of Kneller at the Academy and the first teacher of that fine painter George Stubbs, had a considerable practice in portraiture in Lancashire and other northern counties, but he could do nothing beyond the faces of his sitters. The figures and draperies were beyond the powers of his brush and the painting of a group or composition out of the question. He was obliged, therefore, to invent a method “quite new and extraordinary.”

“Winstanley travelled about and drew pictures from the life in oil colours—often on small pieces of cloth, only the face; pasted them when sent to London on larger cloths; one, two, three or more whole family pieces he did in this manner; only did the faces, sent them to town to Mr. Vanaken an excellent painter of drapery. He stuck them on large strained cloths as he pleased, and made postures and draperies, and so made them complete pictures. This sort of trade Winstanley pursued.” Joseph Vanaken, the painter by whom these surprising things

were done, was a native of Antwerp who settled in London when a young man and remained there until the end of his life. "A man of a good round face, shortish stature, and a small cast with one eye," he was indispensable not only to such men as Winstanley, but to fashionable London artists such as Vanderbank, Hudson, Ramsay, Whood, Davison and others. "Mr. Vanaken," says Vertue, "having an excellent, free, genteel and florid manner of pencilling silks, satins, velvets, gold lace, etc., has worked hard for several painters for dressing and decorating their pictures, which without his help and skill would make but a poor figure. . . . They send their pictures, when they have done the face, to be drest by him, in which he has a very ready talent and more merit than anyone living since the time of Baptist, who painted much in that way for Sir Peter Lely. It is a great addition to their work, and indeed puts them so much on a level that it is difficult to know one hand from another."

The Redgraves, in *A Century of Painters*, say that Vanaken was retained by two artists who paid him jointly a salary of eight hundred guineas a year on condition that he worked for no one else; but this does not agree with the account of Vertue, who mentions the names of six or seven men at least who were assisted by the Antwerp artist. There was, however, some kind of ring or combination to control his services, as Robinson of Bath discovered when he came to London and took the house that was formerly occupied by Jervas.

Robinson, who had been the pupil of Vanderbank, brought into temporary fashion portraits in the manner of Vandyck—the manner, that is to say, of Vandyck's costumes and arrangements. He calculated on the assistance of Vanaken, but was unable to obtain it, as the drapery painter's regular customers threatened to leave him if he worked for the new-comer. It is not clear why Vanaken gave way to them, as he must have known that he was indispensable; but he gave way, as he did before when the same group prevented Vanloo from making use of his services. Vanaken, who made a great deal of money, and collected pictures for his own pleasure, seems to have been destitute of ambition, for he is said to have been a good painter both of portraits and history. He was assisted in his drapery work by a brother who survived him, and was engaged by Hudson, who was one of Vanaken's executors. The other executor was Allan Ramsay, of whom I shall speak in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Allan Ramsay returns from Italy; His early career in England; Mis-statements of his biographers; A new method of painting; "One red colour or mask"; Vertue on his work in London; "Letters from a Young Painter Abroad" ascribed to him; The real author; Hogarth's visits to France; The artists who accompanied him; A visit to Allan Ramsay's studio in 1752; Other Scottish painters working in London; Why Smibert went to America; Bishop Berkeley's appeal to him to return; His varied interests in Boston; Dealings with London artists' colourmen; Prussian blue; Chambers the artist in New York in 1725; Gaven Hamilton's work unnoticed by Walpole; His picture at Strawberry Hill in Walpole's collection; A portrait of him at Oxford in "An Assembly of Artists" at the Ashmolean.

ALTHOUGH Allan Ramsay was prominent for many years in the artistic and social worlds of London, and was the particular favourite of Royalty, we know little about his life. Most of the information concerning him that has been published so far is contained in the sketch of his career written by Allan Cunningham and based principally on material supplied by R. R. Reinagle, whose father, Philip Reinagle, R.A., was Ramsay's apprentice. Ramsay, as we know from a letter written by his father Allan Ramsay the poet to Smibert the Scottish painter, came to London when a youth to study under the Swede, Hans Huyssing; and the same letter shows that in 1736 he went to Italy, after the custom of all the young artists of the time who could afford to make the journey. The date of his return Cunningham was unable to discover, but Vertue gives it, and with it other information about Ramsay that corrects Cunningham on several important points.

Cunningham says that Ramsay remained abroad for three years and then returned to Scotland where he practised as a portrait painter until he removed to London, at a date unknown. These statements are accepted by the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which adds that the artist migrated from Scotland to the south "a few years" after 1754; and by the compiler of the National Gallery catalogue who gives the date of migration as "about 1762." In the catalogue of the National Gallery of Scotland the date is given as 1752. But there appears to be no evidence that Ramsay ever settled in Scotland after his return from Italy, and Vertue's notes show us that the home of the Scottish painter was in London and that although he went to Edinburgh from time to

time it was only when he was taking a holiday or visiting the northern capital to execute commissions.

Ramsay remained in Italy only two years. He returned to London in the summer of 1738, took rooms in Covent Garden, and at once set up as a portrait painter. At first his success was slight, for Vanloo was then the fashion; and Soldi and Rusca were much employed. But Ramsay was taken up by the all-powerful Dr. Mead, and the new-comer soon gained the support of the Scottish element in London, "they being much pleased with their countryman's performance." In less than a year he was fully employed in spite of the competition of Vanloo and the rest, and his commissions included whole lengths of the Duke of Argyll (painted in his robes), the Duchess of Argyll, and the Lord Chancellor (Lord Hardwicke). Another portrait that added to his reputation was one "very like" of his patron, Dr. Mead.

This rapid rise to popularity was not due entirely to Ramsay's ability and the influence of his friends. He had brought from Italy a new method of painting—new, at least to Vertue—and in the eighteenth century, as in the twentieth, anything new was sure to take the town. Ramsay at this time made a practice of laying in the faces in his portraits entirely in tones of lake and vermilion, as Vertue explains in a passage written in 1739 and anything but complimentary to the artist:—

"Ramsay accustoms himself to draw the faces in red line, shades, etc., one red colour or mask before he puts on the flesh colour, which he prefers as a method to make the flesh clear and transparent—and such method was used in Italy by Luti and others and so did Titian, he says, (but is doubted this last) however, when the faces are painted four, five or six times over little or nothing of that first red is to be seen. Certain it is that hitherto the manner he paints in is neither like the valuable manner of Dahl, Kneller, Lilly, Riley, Dobson, Vandyck, Rubens or Titian—however, it is rather lickt than pencilled; neither broad, grand nor free—has more of the finished, laborious, uncertain, modest French, German or Dutch way. His good fortune has been much improved by this year's work. I don't understand that when he draws in the Academy from human nature he has any great skill or practice therein, as many other young scholars excel him; and to adorn his faces or portraits he is much assisted by Vanaken at all times, without which he had made but an indifferent progress."

Hogarth, perhaps, had Ramsay in his mind when he complained that the fact of a painter coming from abroad was always much in his favour, and that if in addition, "he has address enough to persuade the public that he has brought a new discovered method of colouring, and paints his faces all red, all blue, or all purple, he has nothing to do but to hire one of those painted tailors for an assistant (for without him the manufactory cannot go on) and my life on't for his success."

Yet Vertue asserts that Hogarth, who affected to scorn everything that came from abroad, once visited France in the hope of learning something from the artists of that country. He writes in May, 1743:—"Mr. Hogarth is set out for Paris—to cultivate knowledge and improve his stock of art."

Hogarth's biographers make no reference to this visit or to any before 1748, when, according to Nichols, the artist while travelling with a party of friends was arrested and imprisoned for sketching the Gate at Calais. Nichols, whose authority was an English engraver whose name he does not give, mentions only two of Hogarth's companions on this occasion, Hayman the painter and Cheere the statuary. Vertue in a description of Hogarth's journey of 1748, unpublished, I think, until now, gives the names of all the party and says that Hayman was arrested as well as Hogarth. He does not state where the arrest took place and the mention of the Bastille seems to suggest that it was in Paris. There is, however, no doubt that Calais was the scene of the artists' misfortune and Vertue may have used the term "Bastile" merely as a general term for a French prison. The following is Vertue's account of the affair, written in August, 1748:—

"Upon the treaty of peace and preliminary agreed, the passage from Dover to Calais being free and open, several artists resolved and agreed to go to Paris—Mr. Hudson, Vanaken and his brother, Mr. Hogarth and Mr. Hayman, painters, and Mr. Sheers (Cheere) sculptor, but Hogarth and Hayman soon returned—the others went from Paris to Holland, Flanders, etc.—however it happened Hogarth and Hayman attempting to draw some views of fortifications were surprised and clapped into the Bastile, from whence they were soon glad to return to England. The other four went through Flanders and Holland, visited all the curious and famous artists in those cities where they went, and returned to London in about a month or five weeks."

A VISIT TO RAMSAY'S STUDIO

Vertue, whose appreciation of Ramsay increased in later years, mentions that the Scottish painter visited Edinburgh in 1745 at the time of the rising in favour of the Young Pretender; and in this connection a comment made by Walpole, thirty years afterwards, is worth recalling. Walpole in 1775 declared that Ramsay, then the friend and favourite of George the Third, "had been a Jacobite, and had set out to join the rebels," but had arrived too late. There is no hint of Ramsay's Jacobitical tendencies in Vertue's note on the visit to Edinburgh in 1745, but he says that at that time the artist owned a house on the slopes of the Castle Hill by which the Jacobites erected a battery: "but the Castle men observing their intention they fired upon it and soon demolished it." In another place he states that "Mr. Allan Ramsay, August, 1747, is gone off to Scotland for the season; it's said he has purchased some estate there and contracted matrimony with his second wife."

In 1751 Vertue, accompanied by his brother, who was a drawing master at Bath, paid a long visit to Ramsay's house. Ramsay, who was a cultivated and well-informed man, had now attained to an excellent position in London, and both Vertue and his brother were favourably impressed with the paintings, in progress and complete, that they saw in his studio. "His pictures are much superior in merit than other portrait painters"; his men's pictures strong likenesses, firm in drawing, natural tinctures and true flesh colouring. His Ladies delicate and genteel—easy, free likeness—their habits and dresses well disposed and airy, his flesh tender, his silk, satins, etc., shimmering, beautiful and clean, with great variety; his portraits of both generally very like, rather a true imitation of nature than any mannerist." The silks and satins by whomsoever painted were not by Vanaken, for he had been dead two years, but a portrait of that famous drapery man was in Ramsay's studio; and in Vertue's opinion "painted mighty well and very like him." Ramsay's price for a head at this time was twelve guineas.

It has been suggested that Allan Ramsay was the author of the well-known *Letters from a Young Painter Abroad to his Friends in England*, published anonymously in 1748, and this is not surprising for there are curious points of resemblance between the foreign tours of Ramsay and those of the author of the *Letters*. Both were in danger of losing their lives when travelling by sea between Marseilles and Leghorn, both bore letters of introduc-

tion from Dr. Mead and entered the studio of Imperiali; and their tours were made nearly at the same period. But the author of the *Letters* was not Allan Ramsay but James Russel, the son of a Nonjuring clergyman who kept a school at Westminster for boys whose parents were Nonjurors. James Russel, who was unsuccessful as a painter, took up his residence permanently in Italy, where for many years before his death in 1763 he acted as guide to wealthy English visitors who were interested in antiquities and works of art. He was the Russel who at Rome in 1758 took the part of Piranesi in the dispute between that artist and the agent of Lord Charlemont. After his death, in Italy in 1763, his collection of pictures was sent to England for sale, and was described as "the property of the late ingenious Mr. Russel, antiquary, who was a resident at Rome upwards of twenty years, and executed all the principal commissions for the first nobility of the Kingdom."

Besides Ramsay, Vertue mentions several Scottish artists of the early eighteenth century, including William Aikman, Robert Strange, Alexander Nesbit, Jeremiah Davison, Thomas Murray, John Alexander, John Smibert and Gawen Hamilton. Of Aikman, "a very ingenious portrait painter and a modest, good man," he speaks favourably, as indeed does every chronicler. He thinks his design easy and graceful, his colouring natural and lively, and his women genteel; and praises in particular his portrait of Mr. Gay:—"a head, very like and very well done." Aikman appears to have been in a declining state of health, "a tedious, lingering consumption" for a long time before his death in June, 1731. He was so ill in the preceding summer that after painting the portraits of several of the Princesses at one of the Royal palaces his physician advised him to travel to his own country by gentle stages in the hope that the exercise and his native air would bring about his recovery. We are not told whether he ventured on this experiment. Of Strange I shall speak later, and of Nesbit there is nothing to be gleaned from Vertue except that he was born at Leith in 1682. It is likely that he was the "Nesbit, landscape painter," who figures in the list of students at Kneller's Academy in 1713.

Vertue had a high opinion of the technical qualifications of Jeremiah Davison, who, though born in England, was the son of a Scottish father. He says of him, in an obituary note:—

"In the last month of the year (1745) died Mr. Jeremiah

Davison, portrait painter, born in England but the son of a Scotsman. His talent in drawing and painting was in the superior class, a man of lively spirit and had studied much, particularly after the works of Sir Peter Lely, many of which he copied with great attention, and by such means formed from thence and nature a pleasant, easy style of colouring, especially in women's faces and complexions. From thence also he got a free, natural manner of painting silks and satin; besides the help of or assistance of an aide-de-camp Vanaken, draperies and postures painter, who assisted him in many of his works. He had the good fortune to meet with his Grace the Duke of Athol, at a Freemason's Lodge where he much attended. For this reason he painted the Duke's picture, who being an agreeable person this portrait he presented to the Lodge, which meeting with much approbation the Duke and Duchess sat to him for their pictures at large, and several of the Duke's relations and friends—and by this means obtained his Grace's favour and protection, and on that account he took Mr. Davison with him to Scotland and promoted and recommended him in all the business and works he could, so that in that time before his return to London again he owned he received near fifteen hundred pounds for work done. This increased his reputation and number of friends which kept up till he died at his house in Leicester Fields, aged about fifty. Many years before he died he copied the great picture of Charles the First on horseback after Vandyck's painting at Kensington, and several of the beauties at Windsor by Sir Peter Lely."

Davison seems to have had an industrious and prosperous life, but his daughter who inherited his property, was less fortunate. More than twenty years after the death of the Anglo-Scottish artist the newspapers published an appeal on behalf of an invalid tradesman, with a wife and family in distress. "His wife was the daughter of the late Jeremiah Davison, of Leicester Fields, painter, who left her near a thousand pounds, but her guardian dying insolvent has never been able to get any of it."

An eighteenth-century writer says of Thomas Murray that he was "a very handsome man and had the appearance of a man of fashion," and it is certain that he could afford to dress well. When Murray died in 1734 he left forty thousand pounds to his heirs—an exceedingly large fortune for an artist of that period. But Vertue, who is silent about his good looks and fashionable

air, states that he was very penurious and that his money was made "more from usury or improvement than from any great employment in painting." There is in the National Portrait Gallery a good half length by Murray of William Dampier, the explorer and buccaneer.

John Alexander (who is said to have been related to Jameson "the Scottish Vandyck") is an artist of whom not much has been recorded except that about 1721 he painted a huge picture on a staircase at Gordon Castle, *The Rape of Proserpine*. Vertue describes him as "a merry disposed gent who laughs eternally" and as a bigoted admirer of Raphael. An eighteenth-century note from another source suggests that his principal work was left unfinished, and that in painting landscape from nature he was somewhat in advance of his time. "His favourite subject was Mary Queen of Scots, and towards the end of his life he began an historical landscape of the escape of that unfortunate and injured Princess from her confinement at Lochleven. The landscape of the lake, castle and adjoining hills, was done from nature—a fine subject. Had Mr. Alexander lived to finish this picture it would have given him the name of an historical painter."

Mr. Robert Brydall in his *Art in Scotland* suggests that John Alexander is identical with Cosmo Alexander, and bases his supposition on the fact that John Alexander when he was abroad was frequently at the Court of Cosmo de Medici, and dedicated six engravings to that Prince. The idea is ingenious, but except for a possible relationship, Cosmo Alexander had nothing to do with John. Cosmo Alexander, who died in 1772, was a member both of the Incorporated Society of Artists and the Free Society, and the first teacher of Gilbert Stuart. He was one of the heirs of James Gibbs, the architect, who bequeathed:—"to my friend Cosmo Alexander, painter, my house I live in with all its furniture, pictures, bustoes, etc."

With Smibert, Vertue seems to have been well acquainted. He was an Edinburgh man, a friend of Allan Ramsay the elder, who after attaining to a respectable position in London, came under the influence of Bishop Berkeley, whom he accompanied to America with the intention of taking part in a romantic missionary and colonizing scheme in the Bermudas. The adventure was unsuccessful, and Berkeley returned to England, leaving the painter in America, where he settled in Boston. The National

Portrait Gallery contains a half length of Bishop Berkeley painted by the Scottish artist the year he left England.

Much has been written about Berkeley's scheme and those who supported it, but Vertue throws new light upon Smibert's motives in leaving England. Walpole says that Smibert was an honourable man who was disgusted with the grasping and overreaching methods of some members of his profession and therefore sought "tranquillity and honest subsistence in a healthful Elysian climate." Vertue hints that vanity had something to do with Smibert's departure. He was, for his time, a capable painter and enjoyed a good practice, but he knew that he had no chance of standing in the front rank of contemporary British artists and his pride would not allow him to remain in the second. "He was not contented," says Vertue, "to be on a level with some of the less painters, but desired to be where he might at the present be looked on at the top of his profession—then and hereafter—in which no doubt he there succeeded, and Smibert's name in after times will be there remembered." In August, 1728, Smibert "who had very good business here and a great many friends," packed up his pictures and other effects and in spite of entreaties and persuasions set out for the West. He went to a land where at that time he could have no rivals, and remained there, in spite of efforts to induce him to return to Europe and settle in Ireland. In 1735, Berkeley, who was then Bishop of Cloyne, wrote thus to Smibert, after a friendly preamble:—

"What if there be in my neighbourhood a great trading city? What if this city be four times as populous as Boston and a hundred times as rich? What if there be more faces to paint and better pay for painting, and yet nobody to paint them? Whether it would be disagreeable to you to receive gold instead of paper? Whether it might be worth your while to embark with your busts, your prints and your drawings, and once more cross the Atlantic? Whether you might not find full business in Cork and live there much cheaper than in London? Whether all these things put together might not be worth a serious thought? I have one more question to ask, and that is whether myrtles grow in or near Boston, without pots, stoves or greenhouses, in the open air? I assure you they do in my garden. So much for the climate. Think of what hath been said and God direct you for the best."

Smibert found more business in Boston than the Bishop sus-

pected. Mr. John Hill Morgan in his *Early American Painters* says that "in accordance with the practice of that time he was a dealer in colours, brushes, prints, etc., as well a portrait painter, and an advertisement to that effect is in the *Boston Gazette* of Oct. 21, 1743." This is confirmed by the following letters to Arthur Pond, Smibert's agent in London:—

"BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND,
March 15, 1745.

DEAR SIR

I had the favour of yours by Captain Carrey with your cargo in good order, for your care of which and present of the prints I am much obliged. The view from Greenwich and antiquities by P. Panini please more than the others and I hope some number of them will sell. Last August I wrote to you and enclosed a bill for £8 8s. on Mr. Eliakim Palmer, to be laid out chiefly in fan mounts, but I hear the vessel was taken and carried into France. I now enclose you the second of that bill, with one for £18 on Messrs. Samuel and William Baker, which I must trouble you to lay out as by the invoice annexed.

At present there is little talked of or thought of but war, our forces are embarking for Cape Breton, four vessels of force are sailed to lie off Louisburg harbour to prevent any succours or provisions going in. This expedition is a great undertaking for this country, and if it succeeds will be of great importance, and be a terrible blow to France as it will effectually destroy their fishery and make the navigation to Canada very dangerous; but if it does not succeed we shall be almost undone here, for our best men, the flower of the country, are going, and the expense will be a prodigious sum of money, which if we are not assisted in the charges of it from home must ruin this province; but I hope we shall not be deserted by our mother country. My nephew thanks you for your care of his commission, which pleased much. Our respects to your father.

I am, Sir,
Your most obliged humble ser.
JOHN SMIBERT.

This comes by the *Eltham* man of war, who convoys the most ships. There has been an embargo here for more than six weeks and still continues.

Gold leaf, 3,000.

Views of Greenwich and antiquities P. Panini a dozen of each.

Three quarter cloths, one dozen.

Dark Prussian blue, 3 lb., about 18s. or 20s. a pound.

Fan mounts one dozen at 8s.; 3 doz. do. at 4s. 6d.; 20 doz. do. at 1s. 6d.; 40 doz. at 1s.; and about ten or fifteen shillings worth of coloured prints, slight and cheap for japanning. Please to advise of the price of Frankfort black by the hundred and send a specimen of fan mounts, printed but not coloured, of the cheapest sort."

The second letter was written from Boston on April 6th, 1749.

"DEAR SIR,

The first of last month I wrote you and inclosed two bills of exchange, one for £15 on Mr. Bethel, the other for £33 on Mr. Partridge, and now inclose you the second of each of those bills and the first of another for £15 on Mr. Bethel, making in all £63, which I must trouble you to lay out in the under-written articles and to get the cargoe insured. I hope you have received the first letter, wherein the Prussian blue was desired to be got ready, but in case you have not and cannot soon get the sorts wrote for, desires you will take what sorts there is ready that you like best yourself, for as several of the articles are much wanted would be glad to have them sent by the first vessel. The last things you sent came safe but received no letter.

I'm ashamed to give you so much trouble, but you have encouraged me and there is none of my friends so well acquainted with the people who deal in those articles. As for myself I need not tell you that I grow old, my eyes has been some time failing me, but is still heart whole and hath been diverting myself with something in the Landskip way, which you know I always liked. I had lately a present of a cast of the model for Shakespeare's monument from my friend Mr. Schymaker, which pleases me much. When you see him please to make my compliments to him, and to Mr. Gibson of whose welfare I should be glad to know. If you have got the little picture of Michau and the Lady after Titian back again (for I think you wrote you had lent them) should be glad you

sent them with this cargoe. My nephew sends his service to you. With our services to your father, I am, Sir,

Your most obliged humble servant

JOHN SMIBERT.

Prussian Blue, 4 lb. at 18 or 20 shillings.

„ „ 6 lb. at 12 or 15 „

„ „ 10 lb. at 8 or 9 „

„ „ 20 lb. at 4 or 5 „

Pallet and stone knives 1 dozen of each.

Brown Pink, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Carmine, 1 oz.

Gold leaf, 3,000 } (Please to direct the gold and silver leaf
Silver do., 4,000 } be carefully done up in a box by itself.)

Two gold frames for two pictures twenty inches by fourteen and a half. The pictures are not extraordinary, so would not go higher than 12s. or 15s. apiece.

A French Bible, a good edition and neatly bound, this is for my second son a present from my nephew whose favourite he is.

Red chalk, 1 lb.

Pencils (Blackamore Street) in sorts, 20s. value.

Brushes or tools for portraits, 20s. value.”

Smibert's commissions on this occasion also included three hundred and sixty-three dozen fan-mounts of various qualities and sizes, and some dozens of canvases. His letter is interesting for its references to landscape painting, which he must have been one of the first to practise in America; and to London artists, with some of whom he seems to have kept in touch. The model he mentions was of the monument by Scheemakers in Westminster Abbey, and Mr. Gibson was the artist to whom Kneller addressed the letters about the life class, quoted in Chapter One. Prussian blue, for which Smibert gives such a liberal order, was then a comparatively new colour, and popular at a time when there were few blue pigments except the costly ultramarine.

The Scottish painter died at Boston in 1751 and Vertue in recording the event speaks of his nephew. “Smibert,” he says, “had brought forward in his business a nephew of his, Mr. Moffatt, who still follows the same.” This nephew, John Moffatt, was the brother of Dr. Thomas Moffatt of Rhode Island, the employer of the father of Gilbert Stuart. John Moffatt carried on

Dear Sir

Boston April 6th 1749

The first of last month I wrote you & inclosed two Bills of Exchange one for £15 on Mr Bethel & other for £33 on Mr Postridge & inclose you the £ of each of these Bills & if first of another for £15 on Mr Bethel making in all £63.00 which I must trouble you to lay out in the underwritten articles & to get the larger insured. I hope you have received my first letter where in I beseech you was desired to be got ready, but in case you have not & cannot soon get the bills sent for, desiring you will take what bills there is ready that you like best your self, for as several of y^e articles are much wanted should be glad to have them sent by the first vessel, the last things you sent come safe but received the others.

I^r ashamed to give you so much trouble, but you have encouraged me & there is none of my friends so well acquainted wth the people who deal in these articles, as for my self I need not tell you that I grow old, my eyes has become somewhat failing me but I still heart whole & have been diverting my self with some things in y^e Landship way which you know I always liked. I had lately a present of a pair of y^e model for Shakespeare's Monument from my friend Mr Whyman which pleases me much, when you see him please to make my compliments to him, & to Mr Gibson of, whose welfare I should be glad to know. if you have got the little picture of Wincham & Iddy often I have sent again (but I think you wrote you had had them) I should be glad you sent them with this larger. my nephew sends his services to you, with our services to your Father I am

your most obliged humble s^r

John Smibert

Postage Bills &c 10 or 20 shill.
Do 6^c - - - 12 or 15 shill.
Do 10^c - - - 8 or 9 shill.
Do 20^c - - - 4 or 5 shill.

Bills & store knives 10 of each

Brown Bisk 1/2 lb

Cornish 1 lb

Gold leaf (three thousand)

Silver Do 4000

3/4 Printed Cloths 3 doz

Kit-Kats 1 doz

1/2 Lengths 2 doz

2 gold frames for 20. in 20 inches

by 14 inches & a half, of picture are

not extraordinary, but I would not

go higher than 12 or 15 shill. apiece

a French Bill a good Boston & nearly

as good, this is for my friend's use

from my nephew whose service to be is

and check 1 lb

much (Blackman Head) in sets 20 shill. each

brushes or tools for Buttons 20 shill. each

Super paper 5 gross 2 1/2

200 doz Black & white mounts 2 per doz

30 doz Coloured mounts 1 one shill. per doz

30 doz Do - - - 1 one shill. & 1/2 per doz

10 doz Do 2 one shill. per doz

10 doz Do 2 one shill. per doz

2 doz Do 2 one shill. per doz

1 doz Do 2 one shill. per doz

Black & white mounts 20 doz 2 one shill. per doz

Do 10 doz 2 one shill. & 1/2 per doz

Purple & white mounts 20 doz 2 one shill. per doz

Do 10 doz 2 one shill. & 1/2 per doz

Super paper 1 doz 2 1/2 shill.

Do 1 doz - - - 1 shill.

Black mounts for mourning small paper

20 doz & 20 doz large paper Do

we know not of price of black mount

but suppose of each paper may be a

shilling a dozen & 1/2 larger Legation paper

a doz.

Letter from John Smibert of Boston to Arthur Pond in London

A BOSTON PAINTING ROOM

for many years the business founded by his uncle, and the American artist, Charles William Peale, mentions in a letter to his son that he saw Moffatt when he went to Boston in 1769 to buy colours at the shop which once belonged to Smibert.

More than a quarter of a century after Smibert's death the painting-room which he had built for himself at Boston was rented by John Trumbull, then a beginner in the arts and struggling to acquire knowledge in a town which at that time contained no painter capable of giving him instruction. Copley, whose pupil he had hoped to be, had left Boston for Europe, never to return, and Trumbull's only teachers were some copies of Old Masters painted by Smibert and still hanging on the walls of his former studio. There were copies among others of Vandyck's head of Cardinal Bentivoglio; of a Poussin, *The Continnence of Scipio*; and of one of Raphael's Madonnas; and by studying these Trumbull managed to make some progress. Smibert's work is said to have influenced the early efforts of other painters born in America in the eighteenth century.

Of a fellow-countryman of Smibert, a painter named Chambers who also visited America, Vertue tells us nothing, and his silence is natural for Chambers was an artist of the humblest pretensions. Yet his story has interest. As a youth he studied in Edinburgh, under Sir John Medina, and afterwards, in 1709, went to the wars in Spain with his father, who was a captain of horse. Returning to England he worked for a time as assistant to Gouge, a dissipated artist who lived in the Piazza, Covent Garden, at the corner of James Street, and drank himself to death. The next employer of Chambers was another London Scot, William Aikman, who had also been the pupil of Medina; and after leaving Aikman he went to New York in 1725 and remained there nine years. Lord Egmont gives some of these particulars in September, 1735, when Chambers was staying in his house at Charlton to paint inscriptions on the family pictures. "His business," says Lord Egmont, "is only copying and cleaning pictures, and sometimes lettering them at a penny a letter, which is the price I pay him." It is remarkable that Chambers, who does not seem to have painted portraits, should have been able with such limited qualifications to support himself in New York at so early a period.

Among the pictures painted by Smibert before he went to America was a group of some of the members of an artists' club

known as the "Rose and Crown." The group included portraits of Wootton and Gibson, painters, and Bird the sculptor; and of Vertue, one of whose notebooks contains a slight sketch of the composition. Smibert's picture, on a large scale and painted in 1724, has disappeared; but a similar group painted in 1735 is in the National Portrait Gallery. It is the work of Gawen Hamilton, another of the Scottish artists whom I have mentioned as residing in London.

Of Gawen Hamilton (who must not be confused with Gavin Hamilton, a Scottish artist of a later generation) we know practically nothing except from the notes left by Vertue, who says he was born at Hamilton near Glasgow, was the pupil of an obscure painter named Wilson and was admired for his compositions of small figures. Vertue compares them not unfavourably with similar works by Hogarth, a comparison that an examination of such of Gawen Hamilton's works as are known to exist, by no means justifies, and cites as examples of his skill groups of the painter John Wootton and his family and of the Earl and Countess of Strafford and their children. The last-named work is probably the *Portrait of the Earl of Strafford and his Family* which was sold at Christie's in 1919 for £326. For some reason of which we can only conjecture Walpole in his *Anecdotes of Painting* tells us nothing about Hamilton, whose name he mentions but once. This is the more remarkable because Walpole thought well enough of his work to include in the Strawberry Hill collection the group of Wootton and his family mentioned above.

Hamilton's *Club of Artists* represents a gathering at the King's Arms in New Bond Street, of one of several societies of the kind to which Vertue was attached. Those who figure in the picture are Gawen Hamilton himself; Vertue and Baron, engravers; Dahl, Huyssing, Wootton and Goupy, painters; Rysbrach the sculptor; Gibbs and Kent, architects; Matthew Robinson, amateur artist, and Charles Bridgman, described in Vertue's note as a gardener.

The description is correct enough but it gives no indication of Bridgman's importance in his profession, for he was Principal Gardener to George the First and George the Second, and in that capacity planned Kensington Gardens and superintended the excavation of the Serpentine. He was interested in art and architecture, especially in connection with landscape gardening, and brought the French artist Rigaud from Paris to draw a series

of fifteen views of the famous gardens at Stowe. Rigaud's drawings were engraved by Baron, and published by Bridgman, who declared that he spent £1,400 on the undertaking. Nichols says that Bridgman is sketched by Hogarth in the second picture of *The Rake's Progress*.

Hamilton's portrait group was painted by subscription in 1735 for the benefit of the artist, who was perhaps in low water at this time. Each sitter paid him four guineas, and the picture was raffled when it was finished. The subscriber to whom it fell was Joseph Goupy, who, according to Vertue, sold it to his pupil the Prince of Wales. Vertue, careful as he was, may have been mistaken on this point, for Walpole says that Goupy's collection of pictures dispersed after his death, included "a piece in oil by Hamilton with portraits of several artists." In any case the group painted in 1735 was acquired at some time by the family of the Matthew Robinson who figures in it and was in the possession of one of his descendants in 1824. Matthew Robinson was the father of the well-known Mrs. Elizabeth Montague, some memoirs of whom, edited by Miss Emily J. Climençon, were published in 1906. The memoirs contain many references to Matthew Robinson, and a reproduction of a painting which shows him and his wife in a room seated at a table. The painting is credited to "W." Hamilton, but its manner, so far as can be judged by the reproduction, suggests the hand of Gawen Hamilton, whose work has often been attributed to other artists.

Gawen Hamilton attended the supper of the artists' club to which he belonged, held on the 18th of October, 1737, in celebration of St. Luke's Day; caught cold at this festivity, and died ten days later in his fortieth year. Vertue does not mention the name of Hamilton's club, but Mrs. A. J. Finberg in an article on his work published in the Walpole Society's volume for 1918 suggests that it was the Society of Virtuosi of St. Luke. This seemed likely at the time Mrs. Finberg was writing, but evidence that has since come to light shows that the club whose members were painted was not that of St. Luke "the tip-top club of all" as Vertue calls it, whose story I shall tell in the next chapter. Hamilton was not a member of the St. Luke's Club, whose supper or "feast" in 1737 was not held on St. Luke's Day but on November 30th. Goupy, who won the picture in the raffle, had ceased to have any connection with the St. Luke's Club many years before 1737, and William Kent did not join it until 1743. It is more likely that

Hamilton's club was the Rose and Crown, some of whose members were painted by Smibert in 1724. Vertue, who figures in both groups, was little more than a youth when he joined the Rose and Crown Club, which remained in existence until 1745 and held its last meeting at the Half-Moon Tavern.

It is possible that Gawen Hamilton is the "Hamilton, painter" whose daughter, E. Hamilton, on the recommendation of Hayman, received assistance from the charitable fund of the Royal Academy in 1769, and again, as Eliza Sheppard, in 1774. A portrait of Gawen Hamilton is in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. He is one of the painters depicted in *An Assembly of Artists*, which is said to be by Hogarth, an attribution supported by Hogarth's contemporary, Alderman Boydell, to whom it once belonged. It is perhaps one of the several paintings Boydell is known to have bought at the sale of Mrs. Hogarth's effects soon after her death, but in any case it was included in the Alderman's stock when the print-selling business founded by him was taken over by Messrs. Hurst, Robinson & Co. When this firm failed in 1825 *An Assembly of Artists* came into the market and in 1827 the following note upon it was published in the *Literary Gazette*, then the most important journal of its kind:—

"Early painting by Hogarth. Every circumstance connected with the name and productions of this illustrious artist carries with it an interest and excites inquiry. The painting which attracts this our notice was found among other neglected works of art in the stores of Messrs. Hurst & Robinson, and was purchased at their sale by Mr. Tiffin, the printseller. To it was attached a memorandum by the late Alderman Boydell, saying that it was an unfinished picture by Hogarth, not given along with his engraved publications. The subject appears to be the meeting of some society for the advancement of art, the different members of which are represented seated or standing round a table inspecting drawings or other objects of virtu. On a tablet in the room are names with numbers of reference over the heads of the individuals, of whom we can make out the following:—Hamilton, Dahl, Laroon, Gibbon or Gibson, Rysbrach, Vanderbank, Bridgman and Kent, names of very early date in the English school of painting. It would be desirable to ascertain the occasion for which this painting was produced, as it seems to be anterior to any known establishment of a society of arts in this country. It appears from the style to

A SOCIETY OF ARTISTS

have been done about the time that Hogarth painted his picture of the Family at Wanstead House."

There are fifteen figures in all in this group, which is mentioned as *Portraits of a Society of Artists that existed about 1730* in John Bowyer Nichols' *Anecdotes of Hogarth*. The same title was given by R. Cooper to the etching of the subject made by him in 1829, and published in the same year by W. B. Tiffin, the printseller who bought the original work at the sale of the property of Messrs. Hurst, Robinson & Co.

CHAPTER FIVE

Joseph Goupy; The favourite of Kings and Princes; Releases the little Prince of Wales; His friendship with Handel; Loses the musician's legacy; Romantic cause of Goupy's poverty when old; His earlier successes; A member of the Society of Virtuosi of St. Luke; Origin of the Society; Founded by Vandyck and continued by Lely; Sketch of its history; The Society's Feasts; "A Westphally Ham and Chickens"; Fines for swearing; John Wootton; His dinner-party in Cavendish Square; Thomas Butler, animal painter; Rysbrach oppressed by Gibbs the architect; His patron, Dr. Cox Macro; A friend to artists; Rysbrach's spelling; New light on Francis Hayman; His excellent character and enormous appetite; Supported by Lord Radnor; A letter from Hayman; The bill for his wife's funeral; Dr. Macro and Matthew Buchinger the handless artist.

JOSEPH GOUPY, the winner in the raffle of Gawen Hamilton's portrait group, was a clever water-colour painter of French extraction and the nephew of Louis Goupy, an artist and a well-known teacher. Born in London in 1689, Joseph Goupy was a great favourite with George the First. As the Royal drawing master he was sometimes invited to dine at the Palace, and on such occasions the King would send him dishes from his own table and bottles of his favourite wines. His pupils included George the First's grandson, Frederick Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, and their eldest son. Goupy, who in conjunction with Peter Tillemans painted a much-admired set of scenery for the Opera House, had many musical friends, among whom was the renowned Handel.

In some reminiscences of Goupy published a few years after his death it is said that he was on excellent terms with Handel until some sarcastic remarks made by the composer led to a quarrel. Goupy then satirized Handel's gluttony in a still-existing sketch which shows him with a hog's snout, seated at the organ, and with dainties of all kinds indicated in the background. This cost Goupy a legacy which Handel had specified in his will, and now struck out. The artist when showing the sketch to his friend, the writer of the reminiscences, said that he did not then mind the loss, as Frederick Prince of Wales and the Princess his wife, with both of whom Goupy was in high favour, were immensely diverted with the caricature.

Goupy at this time was in constant attendance at the Prince's house, retouching old pictures for him or designing illustrations for his amusement—illustrations that Goupy admitted were not

in the best of taste. On one occasion when the Prince had sent for him to make drawings, young Prince George, afterwards George the Third, was in the room. The little boy, between whom and his father there was no love lost, was standing behind a chair in disgrace and the visitor at once made up his mind to beg for his release. "Come, Goupy," said the Prince of Wales, "sit down and draw me a d——d good picture." "Sir," replied the artist, "permit me first to take little George out of prison. How can I sit down or employ my invention while so fine a young gentleman stands before me deprived of liberty and under your displeasure?" The Prince turned to his son. "Come out, George," he said, "Goupy has obtained your liberty and pardon."

Prince George never forgot this kindly intervention on his behalf, of which Goupy ventured to remind him after his accession to the Throne many years later. Goupy lived at Kensington, and the King, when driving through the village one day, observed his old drawing master standing by the door of a coffee-house. The King, who had lost sight of him for years, stopped his coach and calling Goupy to the door, conversed with him in friendly fashion for some time, and said at length that he hoped his savings had been sufficient to support him in comfort in the decline of life. The artist was at this time in desperate straits and in momentary expectation of arrest for debt, but he was a man of great pride and spirit and he could not bear to tell the King the truth. He gave him an affectionate and respectful look, and said, "Sir, I once took you out of prison: I hope you will not suffer me to be put into one," and then, overcome by his feelings, bowed and hastily retired.

The King enquired into his affairs and settled a pension upon him forthwith, but Goupy in spite of the Royal generosity was always a poor man. His friend says that the pension was paid to the day of his death but that Goupy "had kept a mistress in his youth who became mad, and as he could not bear to see in her old age the object of his love and pleasure confined in Bedlam he took her to his own house, where the expense of attendance, etc., was so great that he lived and died in very indigent circumstances."

Yet in his youth and middle age Goupy had more opportunities of making money than almost any artist of his time, and "wanted no cunning," according to Vertue, to make full use of them. As teacher to nearly all the contemporary English Royal-

ties he was for years the most fashionable of drawing masters; he bought and sold pictures for Royal and noble patrons, and produced innumerable copies of Old Masters executed in water-colours for which commissions were not lacking. The Princess of Wales was an admirer of these copies and numbers of them were displayed in her dressing-room at Leicester House, on the walls of which no works but those of Goupy found place. From the worldly standpoint his position was enviable, and as we have seen he belonged to one of the principal clubs of artists, that at which he won Gawen Hamilton's picture in the raffle of 1735. At some earlier period the most exclusive of all the clubs, the Virtuosi of St. Luke, had paid him the compliment of election to membership. But in 1727 there came a sudden unpleasant termination to his connection with this ancient and important society, whose members he treated with such grave discourtesy that it could not be overlooked.

The Society of Virtuosi of St. Luke, or St. Luke's Club, is sometimes spoken of by eighteenth-century writers as Vandyck's Club and is believed to have owed its origin to the practice of that great master when in England of inviting to his house at regular intervals the principal artists and connoisseurs of the time. These meetings are said to have taken place in the winter months, generally once a week; and on the 18th of October, St. Luke's Day, he was accustomed to entertain them in a splendid manner. These meetings and festivities ended with Vandyck's death, but after the Restoration, Sir Peter Lely, rising in fame and fortune, revived them at his house in imitation of Vandyck.

After Lely died in 1680 there was another break in the continuity of the meetings which lasted until 1689, "when several of the most considerable Virtuosi, emulated and encouraged by Mr. Riley the King's Principal Painter, met at a public tavern, and remembering the inconvenience of so many persons meeting at a private house (besides the freedom) they resolved to meet in former manner, but at a tavern, one evening in the week during the winter and once a month in the summer."

Riley was chosen as Steward of the first dinner given by the organization in its revived form, but he never served. The gout that ultimately caused his death was already threatening in 1689 and at the "feast" of October 18th his friend Closterman acted as Steward in his place. Closterman was followed in 1690 by Giles Green, who was succeeded by Grinling Gibbons the famous wood-

carver. It was the duty of the Steward to provide the annual dinner at a tavern of his choice and to pay out of his own pocket any costs exceeding the crown each subscribed by the members. "At first," says Vertue in recording the proceedings, "it was the custom of the Steward to give a Westphally ham and chickens, but after times and generous minds added more, oftentimes at the greatest tavern in London and in a splendid manner. In case of the death of a Steward, or desertion then the charges or expense of the Feast of St. Luke were defrayed by the company present—so it happened in the case of Mr. John Linton in 1710, and again in the year 1727 in like manner by Mr. Joseph Goupy absenting. Such omission is taken in a most offensive manner and highly resented by the company."

Occasionally, but very rarely, an outsider was admitted to the Feast, as in 1730, when Vertue who was Steward in that year, was allowed to introduce his friend, Mr. William Thomas. The custom of dining at a tavern was broken only once, in 1718, when Sir James Thornhill, whose means permitted him this indulgence, entertained the members at his own house.

I have found no mention of Hogarth, Thornhill's son-in-law, in connection with St. Luke's Club, or of Sir Godfrey Kneller, Jonathan Richardson, or Roubiliac, but it is possible that Reynolds may have been admitted to some of its later meetings. His father, writing from Plympton in December, 1744, says: "I understand that Joshua, by his master's means, is introduced into a club composed of the most famous men in their profession." Leslie and Taylor suggest that this refers to the well-known gatherings at Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's Lane. But those gatherings were not confined to men of Reynolds' profession and appear to have been more or less haphazard, and it must have been to the meetings either of the Society of St. Luke, or the Rose and Crown Club that Hudson introduced his pupil.

The Stewards of the Virtuosi included, in addition to those already mentioned, James Gibbs and William Talman, architects; Robert Child, the banker; John Rowley, Master of the Mechanics to the King; William Cowper, surgeon; Christopher Wren, son of the architect; Hugh Howard, artist and connoisseur; Christian Frederick Zincke and Charles Boit, enamellers; Andrew Hay, "collector of vertu"; Michael Rysbrach, sculptor; and William Claret, Henry Cooke, Peter Tillemans, William Aikman, John Wootton, Philip Mercier, and Michael Dahl, painters. The last

named, one of the most faithful of the Virtuosi, was known towards the end of his long life as the Father of the Club, and his death is mentioned in its records of 1743. "About July Mr. Dahl was taken with illness, weakness, and by degrees natural decay—he lingered on till October 20 when he died, being 86. He had been a member of the Club above fifty years."

Lord Egmont, who knew Dahl, says in a note written immediately after the death of the Father of the Club:—

"He was the most eminent face painter in England at the time of his death, and when Sir Godfrey Kneller died expected to succeed him as Portrait Painter to the King; but places at Court are not given away unasked for; besides he refused to draw the Duke of Cumberland when two years old, desiring the Lord who was sent to ask it to tell his Majesty that not having had the honour to paint him or his Royal Consort he was unwilling to begin with a child. The King took it so ill that he immediately gave the place to Mr. Jervas, a far inferior artist. Mr. Dahl had a son who died lately, so his daughter, now living, inherits about £10,000, which her father left. He coloured well and soft and gave an agreeable air to his heads. Mr. Huyssing, a Swede now residing in Leicester Fields, is his only disciple, at least he is the only painter he ever made."

At the meetings of the Club, composed as Vertue says of "men of the highest character in arts, and gentlemen lovers of art," there were rules, strictly enforced, forbidding the members "to profanely curse, swear or use any manner of imprecation." Subscriptions were occasionally invited for the purchase of some picture or other work of art, which when bought was raffled on St. Luke's Eve. The raffle was the preliminary to an entertainment towards which the winner of the prize was expected to subscribe four guineas. The Club, or a committee formed from the connoisseurs who belonged to it, appears to have given advice to members who were forming collections. Vertue, after visiting the gallery of Mr. Walker, the Commissioner and Receiver of the rents of Crown lands, remarks:—"This Gent. has very well chosen pictures, such as was recommended to him by the Virtuosi Club, called Vandyck's Club or the Club of St. Luke." The good taste of the Virtuosi was acknowledged by Walpole, who, after seeing Mr. Walker's pictures, said it was evident that his advisers understood what they professed.

It is not clear when, or for what reason, the Club ceased to exist,

but Vertue does not mention it after 1744, at which date he says "it was still in the highest esteem." Probably its usefulness as a meeting-place for artists and amateurs declined with the steady growth of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in St. Martin's Lane and with the development as an art centre of the Turk's Head Tavern in Gerrard Street, Soho. The annual feasts of the Virtuosi may have been merged in those held by artists at the Foundling Hospital for many years after 1746. The list of those who dined at the Hospital in 1757 is headed "Dilettanti, Virtuosi, Feast."

John Wootton, who is mentioned as one of the Stewards of the Virtuosi, was in his day the most popular painter of dogs and horses and of sporting subjects generally, and pictures by him, or engravings from them, are still to be found in many English country houses. The date of his birth is not known but can be guessed approximately from a statement made by him when giving evidence in an action brought by Joseph Goupy, and quoted in some valuable notes on Goupy contributed by Mr. C. Reginald Grundy to the Walpole Society's volume for 1921. In his evidence, given in 1730, he describes himself as "fifty three or thereabouts." Wootton painted landscapes as well as sporting subjects. They are in the manner of Gaspar Poussin and were criticized severely by Constable, who was perhaps unaware that they were the work of the painter's later years, when his eyes were failing.

But when in his prime Wootton had plenty of appreciation, and more commissions than he could execute. He was employed by George the Second and his son Frederick, Prince of Wales; and frequently attended the race meetings at Newmarket to paint portraits of horses, for which he charged from twenty to forty guineas, according to the size of the canvas. A man "well beloved and of a pleasant, engaging demeanour," he entertained his friends in excellent style at his fine house in Cavendish Square. A letter from Wootton, preserved at Goodwood, gives an interesting glimpse of an artist's dinner-party of the period. It was written at his house in Cavendish Square in August, 1733, and is addressed to the second Duke of Richmond, one of Wootton's most generous patrons and friends.

"MY LORD DUKE,

I hope your Grace has recd. the little picture of Lady Caroline safe, and I wish it answers your Grace's expectation.

If any dust should be upon it pray make use of a clean sponge and water and nothing else, and now my Lord give me leave to return my most hearty thanks for the noble present of Venison you pleas'd to send me, it came safe and sweet and proved a delightful repast. I invit'd some friends to partake of your Grace's bounty and wee did eat and drink your Grace's good health and each man looked like a new varnished portrate, I had some artists with me but they were observed to draw nothing but Corks, thus my Lord your Grace sees where ye Wines in ye Witts out, but I know your Grace is so good as not to expose the nakedness of

your Graces most oblig'd humble Servt.
to Comand

J. WOOTTON.

I beg my duty to my Lady Dutches and Lady Caroline.

P.S. I hope my Lady Dutches recd. no great harm from the fright she was put in by the highwayman that rob'd her Grace and company on Rook's Hill (What a sad Dogg must he be!)"

According to the Duke of Richmond, who first printed this letter in *A Duke and his Friends*, the supposed highway robbery was a practical joke cleverly planned to alarm and deceive one of the guests at Goodwood.

Wootton was the most prosperous of the animal painters of this time who attended race meetings in search of commissions, but a large trade in work of the kind was done by Thomas Butler whose name, I believe, is not mentioned in any dictionary of artists, although specimens of his work appear from time to time at Christie's, and a painting signed by him, *The Godolphin Arabian*, is in the Royal collection. Butler, who was originally a bookseller and stationer in Pall Mall, nearly opposite St. James's Palace, employed a small staff of artists who probably produced many of the works that bear his signature. In a prospectus issued about the middle of the century he announced that he was giving up the bookselling and stationery business and intended to turn his attention in future to drawing and painting, and to the production of sporting prints:—

"He and his assistants, one of which takes views and paints Landskip and figures as well as most, propose to go to several parts of the Kingdom to take Horses and Dogs, Living and Dead Game, Views of Hunts, etc., in order to compose sport-

ing pieces for curious furniture in a more elegant and newer taste than has been yet. Specimens of the Landskips and other performances may be seen at my house. Any Nobleman's or Gentleman's own fancy will be punctually observed and their commands strictly observed by applying or directing as above. Will be at Newmarket this meeting and continue in the country adjacent until after the Second Meeting, and the painting of the beautiful Foreign Horse taken by Captain Rodney, Lord Northumberland's, also the more eminent Stallions will be finished this summer, with many other Curiosities in the Sporting way."

Race meetings at Ascot Heath and other places were also attended by Butler, who at Guildford was involved in a quarrel about a bet, from the consequences of which he escaped at the time. But a month or two later, when he was at Newmarket to paint horses, he was attacked on the course by some of the parties concerned and nearly beaten to death. "I survive," he said, "it is true, and it is a miracle that I do so, but I am not recovered nor do I suppose I ever shall. I crawl about the streets now, plastered together, and I cannot describe what I suffered or what I feel."

Among the Stewards of the Virtuosi Club personally known to Vertue was John Michael Rysbrach, the eminent sculptor who spent most of his life in this country. Rysbrach, a patient, industrious man, had no difficulty in finding work here, but at first it was badly paid and he seems to have suffered considerably from people who exploited his talents, and from pushing and self-advertising rivals like Scheemaker.

Rysbrach was employed by James Gibbs, the architect who designed the church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and Gibbs appears to have dealt harshly with the shy, modest sculptor. He gave him work, but on terms that barely enabled him to exist. The architect is said to have received a hundred pounds each for the figures on the monument of Prior, and to have paid only thirty-five pounds each to Rysbrach by whom they were executed. "Poor Rysbrach," says Vertue, "opened his mind to me and told me of the extravagant exactions on his labours so that he could not possibly have lived had not other business come in to help him to more profit." But Rysbrach, if his profits in this instance were incommensurate with his merits, had friends in England who could appreciate both the man and his art, and among them

was that learned and wealthy divine, Dr. Cox Macro, of Norton, Suffolk, Chaplain to George the Second; and in the opinion of Bishop Hurd, who knew him intimately, "the most complete scholar and gentleman united almost that I ever saw."

Dr. Macro, who had a large and valuable collection of manuscripts, books, and rarities of various kinds, was also a frequent patron of contemporary artists, some of whom he employed to execute pictures and busts, and to decorate his house at Norton. He was much attached to Peter Tillemans, a clever painter of figures, animals and landscapes who was, like Rysbrach, a native of Antwerp. Tillemans often stayed at Norton, where he died in December, 1734, after a very brief illness, leaving unfinished a picture upon which he had been engaged until a few hours before his death. Earlier in the same year Dr. Macro had commissioned Rysbrach to carve a bust of Tillemans, and Rysbrach's letter announcing that it has been sent off from his studio is worth quoting if only for its spelling:—

"LONDON, *ye 4 March, 1734*

SIR

I ask theen Thousand Pardons For Not Sending Soner the Bustow of our Old Friend Mr. Phillemans. But having been very busy with the King's statue with's at present is up and finist at Greenwith's Hospital. I am informed out your letter from ye 14 December about my own bustow with's I promis I shall do wan time permits, but you do me a gradt Daell of Honour in to Heving my bust my price is always 12 ginnes, But upon my old Frindts account we Shall not Differ the same. I have packt up the bust an petestall and Shall Send the Same tomorow witht Mr. Allen ye Bury Carier Directit for you, an if you plast to Send your Servand wan the waggon coints at Bury, He will find the Same, and I remain,

Your most humble Servandt to comand

MICH. RYSBRACH"

Norton continued for many years to be famous for its hospitality and in 1745, Bishop Hurd, then a young man of four-and-twenty, writing from Cambridge to Mrs. Macro to deplore his recent enforced departure from the house, says regretfully:—"The entertainments of Ipswich, the conversations of Norton, and let me add, the wonders of your Apelles, were charming enough to contemplate. How can one help grieving at being

shut out from them?" Here an interesting question arises as to the identity of the "Apelles." Can the reference be to the youthful Gainsborough, perhaps then on a visit to his home at Sudbury, in the same county and only a few miles distant? Dr. Macro had pictures by Gainsborough in his collection.

Francis Hayman was also known to Dr. Macro, whose correspondence gives us a new view of the character of that painter. Hayman was asked to do some decorative painting at Norton but could not come to terms with Dr. Macro, and the negotiations remained in a state of suspense until they were reopened by Lord Radnor, the common friend of both parties. Lord Radnor (Robartes) who lived at Twickenham, not far from Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, was the fourth and last Earl of the earlier creation and unconnected with the Pleydell-Bouverie family to which the title now belongs. He writes to Dr. Macro on July 12th, 1741:—

"I am favoured with yours and hope this may find you in good health at Norton. Mr. Hayman is at present at work for me here. He is, I observe, a little vexed and ashamed of his late conduct towards you and is now very willing to wait upon you when you please upon your own terms, as he will be very happy in your family if you think proper to employ him, so you will I assure you, be quite easy with him. He is a very quiet, goodtempered man and will not cause the least trouble in your family, which you know is no bad circumstance and was not quite the case with a late friend of ours. I really think him a genius, and if he had not fooled away many years at the beginning of life in painting Harlequins, trap-doors, etc., for the playhouse, he would certainly by this time be the greatest man of his age, as he is now of his country."

Hayman followed up Lord Radnor's appeal with a letter of his own written in a clear, flowing hand with many flourishes:—

"SIR,

My Lord Radnor has, I find, done me the honour to mention me to you, perceiving me uneasy at breaking off so abruptly with a gentleman whom I fain would be better acquainted with. This is the first time I ever attempted to drive what they call a hard bargain, and shall be the last, for 'tis plain I have no genius for the thing; so, to cut the matter short, if you please to let the house-painter prime the ceiling, etc.,

twice in light stone colour, which will save me a day or two, and send me word when you would have me come down, I shall show you that I have nothing more at heart than to please and oblige you on the terms you mention in your letter to my Lord, viz. 28 guineas.

I am, Sir,
yr. most Humble Servant
FR. HAYMAN.

I fear you have conceived so bad an opinion of me that you will think me encroaching when I mention the housepainter; 'tis a trifle and my boy can do it, but it is always done for us."

Of the result of this correspondence no record remains, but Lord Radnor's letter suggests that the opinion of Hayman's character commonly accepted to-day is unjust, and that we credit him with failings that were non-existent. Hayman, on evidence that seems to have been based on gossip and rumour, has been pilloried as a drunkard and an evil liver; yet Lord Radnor describes him, at the age of thirty-three, as a quiet, well-behaved man, eminently fit to reside with the family of a divine and scholar, and a person of great local importance. If Hayman bore the character now ascribed to him it is impossible to think that Lord Radnor would have written of him as he did to Dr. Macro in 1741; or that Mrs. Delany in 1748 should recommend him to the Duchess of Portland as a teacher of drawing and painting, "the best master I know of," in succession to the recently deceased Louis Goupy. Nor is it likely that a drunken, dissolute man would have been entrusted by the body of artists with the negotiations of 1760 that led to the establishment of the first exhibition of pictures in the room of the Society of Arts; or that he would have been appointed ten years later to the responsible position of Librarian to the Royal Academy.

Unfounded also is the theory, accepted by most of the biographers of Gainsborough, that Hayman was the guide and instructor of that great master. The theory is based only on two lines in Edwards' *Anecdotes of Painting* (published twenty years after the death of Gainsborough) in which it is stated that he was sent to London when a boy to study under Hayman, "with whom, however, he stayed but a short time." This is the only passage in the early writings on Gainsborough that connects his name with

Hayman; and no biographer of Hayman says a word about his having taught Gainsborough. Those who knew Gainsborough and wrote about him describe him as self-taught. "Nature was his master, for he had no other," said Philip Thicknesse, his acquaintance for five-and-thirty years. That Sir Joshua (who knew Hayman intimately) regarded Gainsborough as self-taught is evident from the remarks he makes in his Fourteenth Discourse on the work of his great rival.

Hayman, of course, was not a genius, as Lord Radnor supposed; but professionally he was a man of good standing, and except the gossip and rumour to which I have referred there is nothing to show that he was a drunkard. On the other hand he is said to have been an enormous eater, and it is rare that the heavy drinker has a large appetite.

In an article published in the *European Magazine* after Hayman's death it is said that his appetite was notorious, even at a period when gluttony was the fashion among the citizens of London. The writer of the article says that at one time Hayman was engaged upon the decoration of a mansion in Fenchurch Street. While the work was in progress the painter and his assistants dined each day at an adjacent tavern, where it was noted that while all had large appetites that of Hayman was Gargantuan. The landlord of the tavern declared that their consumption of food would have ruined him, if it had not made them:—"objects of great celebrity and curiosity in this quarter of the City—where we are good judges of such things. The consequence was that every noon we had a gormandizing exhibition, and my house full of customers to see it. The conversation on the subject induced thirst, and the sale of liquors compensated me for my loss by the appetites of Mr. Hayman and his fellows."

It has been urged as a proof of Hayman's evil living that he was out every night and rarely or never returned home until the small hours, but this, if true, may be explained by the fact that he was on bad terms with his wife and avoided her society as much as possible. The story goes that a few days after the death of Mrs. Hayman her husband was examining the bill for the funeral, when he was interrupted by a visit from James Paine the architect, who was an intimate friend and knew how unhappy the painter's marital relations had been. Hayman complained to Paine that some of the undertaker's charges were too high. Then, shrugging his shoulders, he said:—"Perhaps after all I

ought not to grumble, for she would have paid such a bill for me with pleasure."

Dr. Macro, eminent as he was for scholarship and for his encouragement of painting and sculpture, was sometimes attracted by trivial aspects of the arts; and the arrival in London of a German dwarf who could draw, though destitute of hands, was as interesting to him as it appears to have been to a much more important collector of pictures, the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole. The dwarf in question, Matthew Buchinger, visited London in 1730. Born without feet or hands he was yet an artist in a small way, could dance a hornpipe on his stumps "incomparably well," play several instruments and write his name backwards.

The artistic side of Buchinger appealed to Dr. Macro, who wrote from Suffolk to London to commission Peter Tillemans to make a sketch of him. It still exists, and shows the dwarf holding a pencil between his handless wrists. Not content with this the Doctor sent another artist, Edward Godfrey, to make a second portrait of Buchinger and to sketch the devices that enabled him to play upon the hautboy and other instruments. Godfrey saw Buchinger at work and thus described his performance:—

"When I was there he was finishing a piece for Sir Robert Walpole which he asked fifty guineas for, besides what Sir Robert will be pleased to give him for finishing the same with his arms. It is about the bigness of a sheet of paper; the body of it is drawn in perspective with statues, and on one side is the little man's own picture, in the compass of six inches by four, very like him. Instead of shades for the curls of his peruke are psalms written in different characters which at some distance look like shades done with a hair pencil. On the other side at the top is Sir Robert's arms."

The writer urged Dr. Macro to buy for ten guineas a portrait of George the Second which the dwarf had executed in similar style. "I believe," said the ingenuous Godfrey, "that when the man is dead, like many famous paintings, it will be of much greater value." But the Doctor, interested as he was in Buchinger and his works, was too sensible to follow in the steps of Sir Robert by paying an extravagant sum for a mere curiosity. He contented himself with buying, for half a guinea, a card upon which, in the midst of many flourishes, the handless artist had written his name reversed, skilfully enough and with a fine pen.

CHAPTER SIX

Louis François Roubiliac; Married at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields; A hard struggle for fame; "The shivering hand of meagre care"; The statue of Handel; A master of likeness; Increase in the popularity of bust portraits; Roubiliac unable to draw; Sir Robert Taylor and the Mansion House pediment; The Duke of Montagu's memorial; Martin Folkes collaborates with Roubiliac; Vertue and Roubiliac robbed by footpads; A mysterious tragedy; The Newton statue at Cambridge; A shoemaker's criticism; The statue of Shakespeare; Letter from the Duke of Chandos; Roubiliac's widow; Sale of his property; Gravelot challenged to fight; Takes Major the engraver to France; Major and the Bastille; Andrew Hay; Jonathan Richardson; Thomas Hudson; His life at Twickenham; A visit to his London studio; "The Art of Painting"; Brushes in 1748; A list of artists at the time; Joshua Reynolds and the two hats; Reginald Barwick; Wilkes the butterfly painter; The brothers William and Prince Hoare; Charles Philips and his portraits; The influence of Watteau; Reynolds' admiration for him; "A master I adore."

OF the sculptors practising in England before 1750 the most eminent was Louis François Roubiliac, whose biography, published in 1882, has been written by his countryman Le Roy de Sainte Croix. But from this biography we learn little that is new except that Roubiliac won the second Grand Prix at the French Academy in 1730. Most of Le Roy de Sainte Croix's material was obtained from the writings of J. T. Smith, whose father was one of Roubiliac's assistants; from Allan Cunningham, and from various correspondents of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Further information about the French sculptor is given by Austin Dobson, in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and in some articles in the *Magazine of Art*.

However, none of these authorities gives the date of Roubiliac's arrival in England, which, if he won the prize at Paris in 1730, must have been at some time between that year and 1735. For in 1735 he was married in London, at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, to a bride who was probably one of his countrywomen, Caroline Magdalene Hélot. By her he had a son of whom nothing is known. Soon after his arrival in London he is said to have found employment, either with Cheere or Carter; and according to a romantic story, of which more than one version is current, picked up a pocket-book full of bank-notes, whose owner, when the property was restored to him, befriended the sculptor and enabled him to take the house in which most of his work was

accomplished. There is a tradition that the pocket-book belonged to Sir Edward Walpole, but his brother Horace says nothing of the incident of its loss and recovery in his sketch of Roubiliac's life in the *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, though he speaks of commissions given to him by Sir Edward.

The story that Roubiliac's honesty was rewarded by generous patronage that made his progress easy in England does not accord with the hints thrown out by the writer of some verses published in the *London Magazine* in 1738. These suggest that he endured hardship and privation before the unveiling in that year, at Vauxhall, of his statue of Handel, which brought him reputation and the prospect of regular employment. The poet, who addresses himself "To the Master of Vauxhall Gardens on his employing the ingenious Mr. Roubiliac to carve the statue of Mr. Handel," refers to the dark days, now past, when the sculptor's genius was checked by "the shivering hand of meagre care"; and after congratulating the "Master" (Jonathan Tyers) on his choice of an artist, ventures to prophesy that:—

"When times remote dwell on Roubiliac's name,
They'll still be just to thee who gave him fame.
Together blended, faithful friends you'll rise,
Whilst thou the means and he the art supplies."

It is in 1738, and in connection with the success of the Handel statue, that Vertue makes his first reference to Roubiliac. He speaks of him as a sculptor of merit who had been in England several years "labouring to gain reputation," and I learn from another contemporary source that one of his earlier imaginative works was a *Rape of Lucretia*, of which nothing now is known. But these works, says Vertue, brought him small encouragement. "Mr. Rysbrach, statuary, had all the most considerable employments; and after him Mr. Scheemaker had also the run of business in making monuments and other works after he had done the monument of Shakespeare."

When praising the statue at Vauxhall Vertue mentions several other works executed by Roubiliac in or before 1738, busts of Oliver Cromwell and Sir Isaac Newton; and a clay model of Farinelli the famous singer which he describes as an excellent likeness. In later notes he emphasizes more than once the resemblance between the busts of Roubiliac and the originals. Writing in 1741 he remarks that "Mr. Roubiliac has modelled from the

life several busts or portraits extremely like. Mr. Pope, more like than any other sculptor has done—Mr. Hogarth, very like—Mr. Isaac Ware, architect, Mr. Handel, etc., being very exact imitations from nature.” No less was Vertue impressed with a bust seen in 1749; that of Martin Folkes the antiquary, “cut in marble, a most exact likeness of him—his features strong and masculine with a natural and just air of likeness, as much as any work of this kind ever seen, equal to any present or former ages.”

The bust of Dr. Mead, at the College of Physicians, is another example of Roubiliac’s success in reproducing the characteristics of his model. George Edwards, one of the Librarians of the College, said of this bust, which was the gift of Dr. Askew:—“I cannot help informing succeeding generations that they may see the real features of Dr. Mead in this said bust; for I, who was as well acquainted with him as anyone living, do pronounce this bust of him to be so like that as often as I see it my mind is filled with the strongest idea of the original.” A curious story is told of Roubiliac’s exactions when Dr. Askew paid him for the bust. The original price was fifty pounds, but the doctor was so pleased with the sculptor’s work that he voluntarily paid him double the sum that had been agreed upon. Even this did not satisfy Roubiliac who sent his patron a bill for £108 2s. Dr. Askew paid it, even to the odd shillings, and then, full of indignation, sent the receipt to Hogarth in order that he might show it to the artists at their next meeting—presumably at the St. Martin’s Lane Academy.

No doubt the marvellous characterization of Roubiliac’s busts was principally responsible for the increasing popularity of sculpture, especially in the form of portraiture, to which a writer refers in 1747, in *The London Tradesman*. He says, after speaking of the work done by certain types of statuaries:—

“There are others who make figures in clay, wax, and plaster of Paris. The taste of busts and figures in these materials prevails much of late years, and in some measure interferes with portrait painting. The Nobility now affect to have their busts done that way, rather than sit for their pictures, and the fashion is to have their apartments adorned with bronzes and figures in plaster and wax.”

Despite the skill displayed in the production of good busts and statues it was many years before the French artist obtained any work of great importance. He tried, and failed, to obtain the

commission to carve the relief on the pediment of the Mansion House; a commission that Scheemaker, Cheere and others were anxious to secure. It is said that most of the competing artists when they appeared before the Common Council, submitted drawings of their designs, but when Roubiliac was asked for a sketch he replied, "I have brought none, but if you will give me a lump of clay and let me be shut up in a room I will do something for you."

An eighteenth-century writer who told this story some years after the death of Roubiliac, says:—"It is remarkable of this great artist that though he was so famous as a statuary he never could give the adequate sketch in drawing of his design," and certainly the drawings of his that I have seen are not the work of a master of the pen or pencil. It seems, however, that he did submit some sort of design for the pediment, the commission for which was given to a then unknown sculptor named Taylor. Vertue states that it was given to Carter, and that Rysbrach and Gravelot were also among the competing artists, but in both points he is mistaken. Mr. Sidney Perks, the author of the *History of the Mansion House*, says that in the minutes of the Common Council relating to this competition the names of Carter, Rysbrach and Gravelot are unmentioned. Vertue no doubt wrote Carter by a slip of the pen, as his description of the successful candidate fits Taylor. "This young man," he writes, "had been sent to Italy about a year or two ago, and his interest being strong, when the Common Council put it to the vote among them, they as their usual custom is in all other matters had eight in ten for their countrymen and citizen." Robert Taylor, to whom the commission for modelling the relief was given over the head of Roubiliac, was the son of a rich stone merchant, who was one of the contractors for the masonry of the Mansion House.

This young artist, who completed the carving of the pediment in 1745, although undistinguished as a sculptor was in some respects a man of note. Early in his career he abandoned sculpture for architecture, and his prodigious industry in the latter profession enabled him to amass a great fortune. Taylor, who became architect to the Bank of England, and surveyor to the Admiralty and to the Foundling and Greenwich Hospitals, is said never to have remained in bed after four in the morning, and to have made a point in all his numerous professional journeys, of travelling at night in order that he might save time by

sleeping in the coach. He was knighted by George the Third and bequeathed part of his wealth to the University of Oxford, for the encouragement of the study of modern languages.

Roubiliac's chance came when he was invited in 1748 to execute the memorial to the second Duke of Argyll, that distinguished soldier and statesman whom Scott introduces in *The Heart of Midlothian* as the friend and protector of Jeanie Deans and her sister Effie. The unveiling in 1749 of the memorial to the Duke in Westminster Abbey brought the French sculptor the recognition he had so long deserved. The Argyll memorial met with general approval, "outshining in nobleness and skill," says Vertue, "all those before done by the best sculptors this fifty years past."

Martin Folkes, whose marble bust by Roubiliac was so much admired by Vertue in 1749, collaborated with the sculptor in 1750 in designing the monument to the Duke of Montagu now in the church at Warkton, Northamptonshire, which is not far from the Duke's former seat at Boughton. It was erected by the Duchess, but Dr. Birch, who knew Folkes, says that everything connected with it was entrusted to him. The Duchess to begin with placed a thousand pounds in his hands towards the cost, but declined to give him any instructions or to look at the models he had prepared. Nor would she permit him to consult any other person in the business, except, presumably, the artist he employed. Dr. Birch, writing before the design was completed, says, "Folkes intends to introduce a figure of the Duchess into the group. Roubiliac is the sculptor." The Duchess of Montagu, whose figure in an attitude of lamentation is to be seen in the memorial at Warkton, died soon after her husband and a monument to her by Roubiliac is in the same church. Walpole thought both works "well performed and magnificent" but wanting in simplicity.

Vertue says nothing of the interesting leaden figure of Sir John Cass, modelled in 1750 and now adorning the entrance hall to the Technical Institute in Jewry Street; an institute that owes its origin to bequests made by Sir John for educational purposes. Nor does he tell us of Roubiliac's encounter with footpads in the spring of this same year of 1750. The sculptor was walking through Dean Street, Soho, between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, when he was stopped by three men. "One presented a pistol to him, and swore he would blow his brains out if he made any noise; and while he was giving him his money a second came

behind and took out his watch." Roubiliac's experience was common enough at the time. Vertue had suffered the same fate a few years earlier, as he says in one of his volumes of notes:—"Lost such another book as this, with some notices and a picture in watercolours, being robbed by street robbers one night, Saturday, 3rd September, 1743, besides money and rings." He lamented particularly the loss of one of the rings, which had been the gift of his friend Lord Oxford, but to us the disappearance of the notebook is the regrettable thing. More unfortunate than Roubiliac or Vertue was the mezzotinter, John Faber the younger, who in 1737 when on his way home and close to his house, was shot at by a footpad and severely wounded in the breast. In all three cases the thieves escaped.

Roubiliac is mentioned by Vertue for the last time in 1752, when the chronicler visited the studio in St. Martin's Lane and found much to admire in the work he saw there:—"the inventions very copious and free picturesque—as light and easy as painting; a basso relievo of Spencer Cowper, Judge, to be executed for his memorial in the country—seated in his judgment seat, Justice and Prudence standing on each side, has much spirit and grace, the whole monument not above four foot high."

The judge for whom the memorial shown in Roubiliac's studio had been designed was the younger brother of Lord Chancellor Cowper and the grandfather of William Cowper the poet. The completed work was erected in the church at Hertingfordbury, a suburb of Hertford; where Spencer Cowper was buried, close to the scene of a tragedy with which his name was connected—a tragedy that excited an extraordinary amount of public attention in England in 1699. Cowper, then a rising young barrister, went from London to Hertford to attend the assizes; and dined at the house of a rich widow, a Quakeress, whose beautiful daughter is supposed to have been in love with Cowper, who was a married man. He spent the evening with the daughter, whose body was found next day in the river near by, with marks upon her neck that suggested strangulation. The young barrister and three of his friends, all lawyers, were charged with the murder of the girl. They were acquitted after a long trial and the mystery of her death has never been explained.

One of the most famous works by the French sculptor is the statue of Sir Isaac Newton at Trinity College, Cambridge. It is mentioned by Wordsworth in his *Prelude*, and was regarded by

Chantrey as the noblest figure of its kind in England. It was erected in 1755, and a letter written in that year to Dr. Macro indicates that the sculptor was a sensible man, ready to act on the advice of the humblest critic if he thought it reasonable. The story told in this letter, certainly bears a singular resemblance to another told of Apelles, but history repeats itself sometimes, and there seems to be no reason for doubting the faith of Dr. Macro's Cambridge correspondent, John Nevil of Emmanuel College, who, after describing the new statue in enthusiastic terms, adds:—"It was pleasant enough the observation of a shoemaker, who after he had surveyed the figure from head to foot, said 'It might be a good statue for aught he knew, but as to the shoe he was very confident it was not well made.' Roubiliac, standing by and hearing the man, asked him what fault he found with it? He then told him that in such a place, pointing to it, there wanted a seam. The sculptor smiled, said the man was right, and with all the complacency in the world took out his chisel and cut one." Roubiliac could be very accurate in the representation of footwear, and in his statue of Shakespeare at the British Museum the poet's slippers, one of which is trodden down at heel, are carved with elaborate care.

This statue was a commission from Garrick, by whom it was bequeathed to the Museum, and for the likeness of Shakespeare Roubiliac seems to have relied principally upon what is known as the Chandos portrait of the dramatist, which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. When the sculptor made his model the portrait was owned by the Marquis of Carnarvon, afterwards Duke of Chandos, to whom Garrick sent Roubiliac with a request that he might be allowed to have it copied. When Roubiliac called the Marquis was unable to see him, but he sent Garrick the required permission in the politest of letters:—

"MINCHENDEN HOUSE,
3 November, 1758.

SIR,

When Mr. Roubiliac brought me the favour of your letter I was so ill in bed I was totally incapable either of answering it or seeing him, and indeed this is one of the first letters I have been able to write. It is a very great pleasure to me that I have an opportunity to oblige you, and I am very sure the picture will be very safe in your hands, and you are heartily welcome

to take a copy of it, as is Mr. Roubiliac if you think proper.

The picture is at my house in London, and I shall order a person who I can trust to take it down one day next week and receive your directions, when he shall wait upon you with it, as I should choose its being delivered immediately into your hands for fear of accidents from servants or injudicious people. It hung some time in a damp house, which has damaged it a little, but otherwise is reckoned of great value and I believe is the only original of Shakespeare.

I am, Sir,
Your most humble servant
CARNARVON."

According to J. T. Smith, Reynolds made a copy of the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare for his friend Roubiliac to work from. Roubiliac, who sometimes amused himself by painting in oil, also made a copy of it, probably at second-hand from the Reynolds version. The painter, Abraham Wivell, who saw the sculptor's effort, describes it as deplorable; and in 1794 a commentator on Shakespeare's alleged portraits who had also seen it, declared that Roubiliac had given the poet the complexion of "a chimney sweeper in the jaundice."

There was a tradition sixty years ago among the descendants of Roubiliac that may explain why he ventured to experiment with the brush. The tradition was that, for a wager, the sculptor and Hogarth each executed a work with the tools of the other; but Roubiliac's great-grandson, the late Thomas Roger Smith, the architect, who mentioned the wager in a letter about Roubiliac written in 1862, said that he was ignorant of its result. Mr. Smith, who was a descendant of Roubiliac by his wife Nicole Céleste Reignier, who survived him, knew nothing either of "Miss Crosby of Deptford," whose marriage to his great-grandfather in 1752 is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

Roubiliac died in January, 1762, as the result of unskilful bleeding according to his great-grandson, who declared that the sculptor never had a day's serious illness in his life. His widow, who belonged to an old French family of Protestant refugees, was left with small means and a little daughter of three or four. She supported herself and the child principally by teaching drawing and dealing in foreign prints, and is said to have supplied Josiah

Wedgwood with the book of engravings from which he obtained the first suggestions of those classical designs that adorn many of his vases. Charles Conder, the painter, was a great-great-grandson of Roubiliac, and in the same relation to him stood Colonel Claude Reignier Conder, R.E., the eminent authority on the survey of Palestine.

Most of Roubiliac's property was disposed of by auction soon after his death, and in the sketch of the artist's life by J. T. Smith (who was in no way connected with Thomas Roger Smith) a somewhat contemptuous description of the sale is given. Only two of the lots are mentioned, one a portrait of Roubiliac painted by himself, that fetched three and sixpence, and the other a group of eight pictures for which ten shillings was the highest bid.

J. T. Smith, who was writing of an event that took place before he was born, says that the sale took place on June 11th, 1762. This must have been the supplementary sale of household furniture and miscellaneous effects, for the great dispersal of the sculptor's works, finished and unfinished, was early in May. Langford, the principal art auctioneer of the time, conducted the sale, which lasted four days and included:—"The genuine and entire Collection of Models, Moulds, Casts and Busts in Terra Cotta, Marble and Bronze, of Mr. L. F. Roubiliac, Statuary, deceased, at his late dwelling house in St. Martin's Lane; together with several curious antiques purchased by him in Italy; an exceeding curious Layman, big as the Life; and two large and capital bronzes of Fame and Mercury."

One of the lots included the death mask of Sir Isaac Newton that was used by Roubiliac when modelling the head of the Cambridge statue, a mask of which Romney possessed a replica "taken very finely in Plaster of Paris." Roubiliac's mask now belongs to the Royal Society, for which it was acquired by a former Secretary of that institution, Samuel Hunter Christie, a son of the auctioneer, James Christie. The Secretary, anxious to obtain a bust of the Society's greatest President, enquired one day at the shop in Tichborne Street of a dealer in statuary and casts. The proprietor told Christie that he knew of no bust but that he had a mask of Newton which his father had bought fifty or sixty years earlier at Roubiliac's sale. He seemed to regard it as lumber and parted with it for a few shillings.

A fine example of Roubiliac's work, a marble bust, was purchased by the committee of the National Art Collections Fund in

1926, and presented to the National Portrait Gallery, where it is catalogued as a self-portrait of the sculptor. It has been accepted as such by Mrs. Arundell Esdaile, a recognized authority on Roubiliac, who has made his life and career her special study. Nevertheless it is likely that the attribution will be questioned by some who compare the bust with the well-known painting of Roubiliac by Carpentiers which hangs near it. That the bust was for many years in the possession of descendants of the sculptor is certain, but this is not conclusive evidence of its authenticity. Nothing is known of its execution, or indeed anything about it, earlier than the first half of the nineteenth century, when it was in the collection of James Thomson, of Clitheroe. There it was regarded, absurdly enough, as a bust of Voltaire, and as Voltaire it was described by Sotheby when he advertised Thomson's collection for sale in July, 1851. The bust was bought by Dominic Colnaghi for £20 10s., and sold by him to Mr. Francis Roubiliac Conder, Roubiliac's great-grandson, who believed that he could trace in it a resemblance to some of the then living descendants of the French artist. Its authenticity as a portrait of Roubiliac was challenged at the time by a contributor to the *Athenæum*.

Of another French artist of this period, Hubert Gravelot, Vertue has a good deal to say. Gravelot, who befriended Gainsborough in his youth, lived for many years in England and was a prosperous man. He kept a drawing school at the sign of the Pestle and Mortar in James Street, Covent Garden, was an accomplished draughtsman, a painter of some skill, and a designer not only of illustrations but of goldsmith's, silversmith's, and cabinetmaker's work. He was a man of extraordinary industry who on occasion worked night and day to complete the commissions with which he was overwhelmed, and is said to have taken ten thousand pounds with him when he returned to France for good. According to Vertue, he was fully aware of the value of his work and lost no chance of self-advertisement. One of his favourite haunts was Old Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's Lane, where Hudson, Hogarth, McArdell the engraver, and artists of all nationalities were frequent visitors. Here Gravelot was in the habit of expressing his views upon his own art and that of others with freedom and vehemence, and this habit led him into trouble and proved that able as he might be as an artist he was not a fighting man. He was declaiming one evening against Sir Andrew Fountaine who, he said, had never encouraged

ingenious men but only blockheads or bunglers in art. This opinion expressed in a company that included several painters gave great offence to one of them, the Frenchman, Clermont, who challenged his fellow-countryman's statement.

Clermont had been employed frequently by Sir Andrew Fountaine, and this, he said, was well known to Gravelot, of whom he demanded an explanation. "Upon which," says Vertue, "Gravelot not doing or endeavouring to do, this Signor Clermont gave him a stout blow on the face, telling him he deserved it justly and could have more if he chose. The other took it, and passed it off, but came no more to the coffee house as he used to do every evening." Clermont was a decorative artist who had worked not only for Sir Andrew Fountaine but for Frederick Prince of Wales; and for many English peers, including the Duke of Marlborough for whom he adorned with grotesques two temples on an island in the Thames near Bray, since known as Monkey Island from the character of his designs.

One of Gravelot's English pupils was Thomas Major, who long afterwards, when the Royal Academy was founded, was the first engraver to be elected an Associate. When Gravelot returned to his native country in 1745, Major, who wished to study in Paris, decided to accompany him; and the Englishman's story of their adventures, written at the request of Thomas Hollis, shows how great were the difficulties that confronted the eighteenth-century art student who travelled abroad. The two artists set out from London in October, 1745, and travelled to The Hague by way of Harwich and Helvoetsluis. At The Hague they hoped to obtain passports for Paris from the French Ambassador, but he was absent from his post, and the English Ambassador refused them any facilities in view of the critical state of affairs caused by the Jacobite rebellion. They were compelled to remain at The Hague until they obtained letters of recommendation to Marshal Saxe, then with the French army at Ghent. The great soldier received them courteously, and armed with a protection from him they were at length able to proceed to Paris, where Major became the pupil of Le Bas the engraver and worked in the drawing classes at the French Academy.

A year was spent peacefully in this fashion, but in October, 1746, the labours of the young artist were rudely interrupted. One day, when he came back to his lodgings to dinner he was told that a gentleman "very superbly drest" had been enquiring for him.

The gentleman declined to mention his name or business to Major's landlord, but he called again late the same night, with several companions, and announced that he had come to take the English student before the chief magistrate of Paris. The consternation in the house was general, and Joseph Wilton the sculptor (afterwards Keeper of the Royal Academy) who shared Major's rooms, climbed out of his bedroom window and remained on the housetop until the unwelcome visitors had departed with their prisoner. They had no warrant for the arrest of Wilton, of whose existence in the house they were unaware, but his position would have been serious had he been challenged. France and England were at war, and Wilton, then the pupil of the French sculptor Pigalle, passed in Paris as a Fleming and only his master and two or three intimate friends were in the secret. Wilton, dreading arrest, remained up all night, and early in the morning hastened to the studio of Pigalle who managed to obtain a protection for him.

The police agent, attended by a guard of soldiers, carried Major off in a coach at midnight. The party called at several other houses at which searches were made, but no more prisoners were taken. At two o'clock in the morning the coach after crossing a drawbridge, passed through a great gateway, and Major found that he was in the Bastille. He had been arrested because a number of Irish troops in the French service had been captured after Culloden and it was an open question whether the English would treat them as prisoners of war or as rebels. In view of the latter contingency the French Government had imprisoned as hostages all the English Protestants they could lay hands on, and Major was among them. Fortunately for him the Irish troops were regarded as prisoners of war, and he was released, though not until he had been interned for three months in the Bastille. But he was not badly treated or badly fed, and was altogether so happy and contented in France that he remained in the country for several years after his liberation.

In the Bastille Major's worst troubles were want of occupation and the gloom of his cell, but he was much depressed by the inscriptions on the floor and walls that had been made by inmates who had preceded him. One of the inscriptions, cut on the floor by a man named Dubuisson, showed that he had occupied the cell for eighteen or twenty years.

Meanwhile Major's acquaintances in Paris were ignorant of his

whereabouts. He had disappeared as hundreds before him had disappeared in a similar fashion, and his stay in the Bastille might have been as long as that of Dubuisson had it not been for the exertions of his landlord, and his teacher, Le Bas the engraver. The landlord contrived to find out where his lodger was and informed Le Bas, who waited on the Governor of the Bastille and obtained permission for Major to see Mr. Selwin, an English banker in Paris. Selwin, who was probably the banker of that name with whom Garrick and Sterne had dealings in Paris some years later, managed to obtain Major's release after a long period of suspense and anxiety.

"At length," said Major, "the keeper came one afternoon and told me to make up my packet, for there was an order come for my going out. This was joyful tidings to a mind that had just before been cruelly agitated. I made up my bundle of linen in a handkerchief and followed my guide. He brought me before the Governor who said he had received an order for my release and congratulated me thereon. At that time I did not fully comprehend the extensive meaning of a congratulation on my lucky discharge . . . not knowing then how few people who unhappily enter this place come out alive from these subterraneous sepulchres. Taking my leave of the Governor I followed my keeper. He brought me through the wooden palisades and great gates to the outer court, where was my friend Monsieur Gravelot, waiting for me in a hackney coach. It was he who had brought the order for my discharge, and he had also a safe conduct or protection for my continuance in France. I may truly say when I saw Monsieur Gravelot our joy at meeting was affecting and reciprocal; as a sincere friend, and having induced me to come to France, he had been greatly hurt and concerned for me at this accident. With an affectionate embrace the tears started from his eyes and trickled down his cheeks; conscious of the violence his country had done me by the infringement of my liberty and the breach of hospitality to a stranger."

Gravelot, who makes a much better appearance in Paris than he did in London when boasting at the coffee-house, had a worthy rival in self-advertisement in the person of Jonathan Richardson. This painter—one of the three described by Vertue as the leaders, or "Old Masters" of his time—was a good man, as Walpole has testified; but his pompous, formal manner, loud elocution, and

unconcealed admiration for his own talents and those of his family, made him an object of satire.

He wrote once to his friend Matthew Prior for advice about the title of a book on art that he thought of publishing, and the poet in his reply suggested that he should call it:—"The History of Myself and My Son Jonathan, with a Word or two about Raphael and Michael Angelo by the way."

When Andrew Hay, the picture dealer, was on the point of starting for Italy, on one of his journeys in search of spoil, he happened to mention in the hearing of Richardson that Father Orlandi was about to publish a book containing a number of biographies of painters. This was a chance not to be lost, and Vertue says that Richardson "was mighty desirous of Mr. Hay to engage Father Orlandi to print an account of him, which he wrote and gave him when Hay went to Italy. But it was such a long epistle of Richardson's own perfections, his son's qualifications and his daughter's, that Hay was ashamed to show it to Father Orlandi, and wrote a small account himself, which was printed." This, presumably, is the note on Richardson contained in *L'Abecedario Pittorico*, which Orlandi published at Venice in 1753.

Andrew Hay, to whom Richardson entrusted his autobiography, was one of the forerunners of those enterprising dealers who at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries ransacked Europe for masterpieces for the collections of their rich English patrons. Hay, who began life in Scotland as a student of painting, followed the example of several other artists of his time and became a picture dealer. He began with a very small capital and endured many hardships, for of six journeys to Italy poverty compelled him to make one, if not two, on foot, after he had managed to cross the Channel. Nevertheless, on those six Italian tours and fourteen others made in various parts of France, he gathered together and brought home many valuable pictures, marbles and bronzes. The profit made by selling these in England enabled him to amass a moderate fortune and he retired from business and returned to Scotland in 1745.

Jonathan Richardson, who died at the age of eighty in the year that Andrew Hay returned to Scotland, was held in high esteem by Pope, always the friend of vain artists. A letter written by the poet in 1737 shows how much he appreciated the society of Richardson. Pope tells him that he proposes to come and

sit to him on the following day, from eleven to one. "If," he says, "you do not want my *face*, you must be content to have my heart and conversation till then. For I want to see you more than you can to see me." Perhaps, as in the case of Jervas, the literary tastes of Richardson strengthened his friendship with Pope. For Richardson was a commentator on Milton, and was the author besides of the treatise, *The Theory of Painting*, which inspired the youthful Joshua Reynolds.

His book on Milton, written in conjunction with his son, was published in 1734, and Walpole in his sketch of Richardson in the *Anecdotes of Painting in England* speaks with respect of "the good sense, the judicious criticisms" that he discovered in the comments on *Paradise Lost*. Hogarth, however, found in the dual authorship the motive for an amusing caricature; and Warburton in a letter written to Dr. Stukeley in 1735 described the book as ridiculous. Stukeley had lent it to Warburton who thus acknowledges his courtesy:—

"I have received the Richardsons father and son, whom you were so kind as to send me, and shall take care of them and return them safe to you. Such a heap of wretched, senseless impertinence, and more senseless vanity I never before saw together, to be matched only by Tom Coryat's *Crudities*."

Jonathan Richardson was one of the most diligent of men until a few years before his death, when he had a stroke of paralysis that affected his right hand and interfered with his painting. But to the last he was as active as his health permitted and was in excellent spirits when, on the 28th of May, 1745, he returned from an excursion to Hampton, to die peacefully two hours afterwards seated in his accustomed chair. "He had the happiness of what Augustus called euthanasia," said Dr. Birch, who officiated at his funeral on the first of June.

One of his three daughters married his pupil, Thomas Hudson, the teacher of Reynolds and a man unpopular with some of his contemporaries. But a good word is said for him by Vertue, who writes in 1742:—

"Mr. Hudson, face painter, a scholar of Richardson and married to his daughter, is a good ingenious man really great of merit; he has abundance of persons of quality and worth sit to him for their pictures, wherein he has had great success; and lately going into the country for some time has met with great encouragement by painting so many pictures in so small a time."

Vertue mentions one thing in connection with Hudson that is new. He says that his marriage to Richardson's daughter was clandestine and hints that there was some mystery about it, which, unfortunately, he leaves unexplained. In criticizing the general scheme of Hudson's portraits he says:—"In this I think he has the advantage of his master, whose daughter he married without the father's consent—but . . ." Apparently the marriage was not a success. A former acquaintance of the artist, writing two years after his death, declared that Richardson by refusing his daughter a portion because she married Hudson without his permission, "laid the foundation of their domestic unhappiness, which increased with their years."

Hudson's first wife died in the painter's middle age, and in November, 1770, when he was sixty-nine, he married Mrs. Fynes of Fleet Street, or, as Walpole gives it, Mrs. "Fiennes." After his retirement from portrait painting Hudson lived in a villa he had built for himself on the river bank at Twickenham, close to Strawberry Hill. An appreciative visitor to the painter's country house in 1760 thus describes his retreat:—

"It is situated in the happiest spot imaginable, though small its beauties are numerous and striking; the nicest judge might examine this little museum and not be able to discover a fault. The backfront stands in a lawn of the finest and most verdant turf, close to which runs the river, always full, smooth and clear; on the right hand of the lawn is a little shrubbery where blooms every fragrant flower and many curious exotics. In the house there is one chamber filled entirely with prints, the finest collection, perhaps, that ever was seen; another room is furnished with pictures, all perfect of their kind, there is a Holy Family by Raphael, and Rembrandt's head of inestimable value. There is also a bedchamber hung with blue paper of the softest and most delicate tint, adorned with sketches and drawings by the most eminent masters and surrounded by a border of papier maché gilt."

The next house to Hudson's by the riverside belonged to Joseph Hickey, Sir Joshua Reynolds' attorney, and to this neighbourhood we owe the only description of Sir Joshua's master that has survived. It is contained in the first volume of the interesting memoirs of the attorney's scapegrace son, William Hickey, which, edited by Mr. A. Spencer, was published in 1913. According to Hickey, Hudson's figure "was rather grotesque, he being

uncommonly low in stature, with a prodigious belly, and constantly wearing a large, white, bushy periwig. He was remarkably good-tempered and one of my first rate favourites, notwithstanding that he often told me I should certainly come to be hanged. I was always playing my monkey tricks with him, and thereby getting into disgrace."

Hickey describes one of his boyish pranks. His father was in the garden one day talking to Hudson, who stood leaning his body forward and supporting himself by a thick cane he used in walking. His position aroused the mischievous instincts of young Hickey, who running up quickly, kicked away the cane with the result that Hudson fell full length upon the grass. Furiously angry, he scrambled to his knees and flung the stick with all his force at the boy who was now in full retreat. It missed him, and Hudson was forgiving enough to accept his apologies. "The next day," said the culprit, "we were as good friends as ever."

When Vertue knew Hudson he was living in Great Queen Street, where the engraver visited him and saw in his painting room the large portrait group that now hangs in the Goldsmiths' Hall, "and portraits of Nobles, Ladies, Archbishops and Bishops, besides gentlemen and ladies innumerable." He saw too the original model, two feet in height, of the Vauxhall statue of Handel by Roubiliac, the intimate friend of the portrait painter. Dr. Birch in a letter to the Hon. Philip Yorke written in 1747, also mentions a visit to Hudson to whom Yorke's daughter was sitting. Birch called at Great Queen Street to report upon the progress of the portrait, and was by no means pleased with it. He says in his letter:—

"I called on Monday at Mr. Hudson's, who, I think, has not been very happy in the first sketch of Miss Yorke's picture; for I assure you that if there had been more than two pictures of ladies in his painting room I should have been a little embarrassed in determining which was intended for her. I hope the future sittings will be more successful for it would be intolerable that she should suffer for an art to which she does so much honour."

Vertue, whose visit to the artist was made in 1751, describes him as then the best employed portrait painter in London. Hudson little thought that as early as the following year the decline of his prosperity was to commence with the arrival in London from Italy of his former pupil, Joshua Reynolds, whom by a strange

chance he met soon after on Mont Cenis when on his way to Rome with Roubiliac. Vertue says of this tour of Hudson and Roubiliac that they started from London in July, 1751, and returned in October, "their tour of Italy very quick and their stay very little, only enough to say they have seen Rome."

Jonathan Richardson in his treatise *The Theory of Painting*, which I have already mentioned, says nothing about the materials and tools used by the artists of his time, but some interesting information on these points is given by the anonymous writer of an essay, *The Art of Painting*, which was published in 1748. That the painter's equipment was unfamiliar to the general public at this time is shown by the fact that the writer of the essay thinks it necessary to explain that an easel is "a frame made of wood, much resembling a ladder, with flat sides and full of holes and something broader at the bottom than at the top." The brushes he mentions as then in use include "pencils of all sizes from a pin to the bigness of a finger, which are called by several names; as Dutch-quill, fitched and pointed; goose-quill, fitched and pointed; jewellery pencils and bristle pencils, some in tin cases and some in sticks." The method of cleaning brushes advised in 1748 would not satisfy a modern painter who took any pride in his tools. "As for your pencils, dip them in oil of turpentine mixed in the smudgepan and squeeze them between your fingers and they will come out very clean." Nothing is said of the shapes of the brushes, all of which, probably, were round. It is said that the popularity of the flat brush in England originated with its adoption by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

In the instructions given in *The Art of Painting* for preparing the surface of a canvas, stress is laid on the need for using honey in the composition of the priming or ground; for honey, we are told, "will prevent its cracking, peeling or breaking out." The use of honey, by the way, is mentioned by Romney in a manuscript note of 1776, "Remember—Honey and Size on Wax and Size for grounds."

Directions are also given in *The Art of Painting* for the preparation of grey grounds for canvases, much used at this time and introduced by Kneller, according to Thomas Bardwell, who, in his book on painting published in 1756, says:—

"Sir Godfrey Kneller in Lely's time studied his manner and prepared his grounds and first lay of colours on such cloths as Lely used, but after Lely's death he soon fell into a slighter

manner which was much more agreeable to his genius and inclination, and invented the cold, grey-coloured cloths on which he established his slight, expeditious style."

The palette recommended in *The Art of Painting* is sober in comparison with those of most modern painters, and contains no yellows more powerful than the ochres. "Communicated to the writer by an eminent hand"; it is thus described:—"Vermilion, Naples Yellow, Yellow Oker, Brown Oker, Light Oker burnt, Indian Red, Lake, Brown Pink, Terra Verte, Ivory Black, Ultramarine or calcined Smalt or Prussian Blue; and remember always to place the white on your pallet next your thumb."

More valuable than the technical instructions of 1748 is the list given "of those painters of our nation, now living, many of whom have distinguished themselves and are justly esteemed eminent masters." This list of "eminent masters" and others contains the names of Gainsborough and Reynolds. Gainsborough at this time was a youth of twenty-one, living at Sudbury, to which town he had returned after a few years' study in London. In 1748, when *The Art of Painting* was published, he was completing his first important picture, the *Wood Scene, Village of Cornard*, now in the National Gallery; a picture which he had commenced when he was a boy of thirteen. In the letter to Bate Dudley which contains Gainsborough's only known reference to his youthful achievements he says:—"This picture was actually painted in Sudbury in the year 1748; it was begun before I left school and was the means of my Father's sending me to London." It is strange that the writer of the essay of 1748 should mention in his list the name of an artist so young and obscure as Gainsborough was then; and almost as remarkable is the inclusion of Reynolds, who was only twenty-five and unknown to fame.

It was somewhat earlier than this—probably in 1744—that Reynolds painted the portrait of the gentleman with the two hats, one on his head and one under his arm, of which Northcote says that he heard the story "so often repeated and from such good authority that I apprehend it to be the truth." This suggests that he did not hear it from the painter's own lips, or he would have had no doubt about the matter. It is more likely that Northcote read the anecdote in the newspaper in which it appeared soon after the death of Reynolds, and repeated in his biography of the master as much of it as he could remember after many years. The original version, which I am able to give, is better in every

way than that of Northcote and was written by an acquaintance of Sir Joshua who claimed that he told the story exactly as the artist used to tell it himself. It should be noticed that the writer mentions Portsmouth, not Plymouth, as the scene of the incident:—

“When I was a very young man (Sir Joshua would say) I met with much success in painting small portraits at a guinea apiece. During some warlike preparations which were going on I went down to paint naval officers at Portsmouth. I had a partner at the time who used to rub in the draperies, and he and I together contrived to make great despatch and pocketed the money pretty fast. All the variety there was in these portraits I endeavoured to give to the airs of the heads; as my friend, who had the chief management of the bodies, had a favourite attitude which he gave to all the figures, whether they were in front, oblique or profile. This was one hand in the bosom and the other upon the sword or in the breeches pocket, with the hat under the arm. I had been particularly pleased as I thought with the head of one gentleman. The finishing of the picture being with me (the figure, *chapeau bras*, etc. were complete) and pleased with the military air of this head it struck me that it might be improved by putting on a fierce cocked hat. I dashed in this hat in a style which gave me great pleasure. This was the *coup de grâce*, and the picture went home—with two hats!”

The list of artists printed in the essay of 1748, in which Reynolds and Gainsborough are mentioned for the first time, contains in all fifty-seven names, which I give with the original spelling:—Austin, Browne, Barrat, Blakey, Crank, Dandridge, Eccard, Ellys, Fry, Gainsborough, Goupy, Goodwin, Green, Grilsieir, de Groit, Hayman, Hogarth, Hoar, Hone, Hymore, Hudson, Jenkins, Knapton, Lambert, Lens, Mathias, Monamie, Murry, Penny, Pine, Pond, Ramsey, Reynolds, Scot, Shackleton, Seymour, Soldy, Somers, Spencer, Smith, Toms, the two Vanhakens, Van Blake, Van Diest, Vanderbank, Vandergucht, Verelst, Wills, Wotton, Worsdale, Wood, Wilks, Wilson, Wolleston and Zink.

Several men of contemporary importance have been overlooked by the compiler of this roll of painters, among them Philip Mercier, Hamlet Winstanley, Thomas Worlidge and Stephen Slaughter; and it is uncertain whether the Wilson mentioned is Richard or Benjamin. Most of the names given are familiar to students, but one or two belong to artists who have

been forgotten. James Worsdale, for instance, is perhaps better remembered as an actor and playwright than as a painter. Worsdale, who was the son of one of Kneller's colour grinders, is the only man with the exception of Scheemaker the sculptor of whom Vertue speaks contemptuously. He describes Worsdale as "a little cringing creature" who had managed to attract the notice of the Queen by producing a pretended portrait of her from memory, which was really an altered and touched-up copy of an original by Kneller. Worsdale, whose "bare-faced mountebank ways" Vertue claimed to have detected, is also abused, perhaps not quite fairly, in the singular memoirs of Letitia Pilkington, the wife of the writer of one of our earlier dictionaries of painters' biographies. The "Wood" mentioned in the list is Isaac Whood, a portrait painter employed by the Dukes of Bedford, who was a kind of retainer of the Russell family and lived principally at Woburn Abbey, where many of his works remain. It is said that when the Abbey was rebuilt by John, Duke of Bedford, the old gallery was preserved and Whood was occupied for many years in making copies of the portraits of every collateral relation of the Russell family that could be discovered.

The "Barrat" of 1748 is probably the well-known copyist who worked for Sir Robert Walpole, and if so we have another variation in the spelling of the name of an artist who figures at different times as Barret, Barrett, Berwick and Barwick. Walpole, who describes him as an indefatigable worker and a good copyist, but in other respects "almost an idiot," gives his name as Ranelagh Barrett. On the other hand, Lord Chesterfield spells it "Barret" in a letter written to Dr. Chenevix in 1749, the letter in which he complains of the poetic aspirations of the artist, who occasionally sends him execrable verses instead of the good copy of a picture he is expecting. This copyist also worked for the Dukes of Bedford, and the spelling of his name appears to have puzzled Sir George Scharf when he made his catalogue of the Woburn pictures. Sir George came across a portrait of Richard Rigby signed "Ranelagh Berwick after Eccadrt," and says of it that the signature "is an off-hand memorandum and appears to have been written in error for 'Barrett.'" The matter is further complicated by Vertue, who, after making an entry in one of his notebooks under "Ranelagh Barret" has run his pen through "Barret" and written above it "Barwick," very clearly and carefully.

Ranelagh Barwick's chief patron was Sir Robert Walpole, who,

as long as he remained Prime Minister, allowed the copyist the use of a room at the Treasury. This room Barwick used as a kind of studio-office and in this way obtained a great many commissions from people who were the more ready to employ him because of his evident friendly relations with the powerful chief of the administration.

To return to *The Art of Painting*, the names certainly misspelt by its author include those of Benjamin Wilkes and William Hoare. The first, who figures in the list as "Wilks," is remembered only for his careful drawings of butterflies and moths, reproduced and coloured by hand in a book published at the price of nine pounds, of which Walpole bought a copy. Benjamin Wilkes, who lived in Fleet Street, was originally a painter of portraits and history pieces, but abandoned those branches of the arts, in which perhaps he was not very successful, after a visit to a meeting of the Aurelian Society. He was so charmed by what the entomologists showed him on this occasion—the examples of "Nature's arrangement of colour"—that he joined the Society, began to collect, and henceforth made butterflies and moths his principal objects of study. Wilkes died in 1749 and his natural history collections were sold, together with his pictures and prints, by Lambe of Pall Mall.

William Hoare—the "Hore" of *The Art of Painting*—appears always to have stood high in public estimation not only as an artist but as a man. Vertue knew him at Bath as early as 1740 when his "particular grace and beauty in manner of colouring and the disposition of his heads" had made him popular in that city of gaiety and dissipation, where he painted portraits, chiefly in pastel. His charge for a head at that time was five guineas, or with frame and glass included, eight guineas. Pastel was the fashion then and was practised successfully in London by George Knapton, Arthur Pond and other artists who found the coloured chalks easier to manage than oil paint; and by George Lambert who executed landscapes in the same medium.

Hoare made many friends at Bath, among them Ralph Allen of Prior Park, where Richard Graves the author met the painter, whom he describes as "not only one of the most friendly, virtuous and inoffensive of men, but one of the best classical scholars, both in Greek and Latin, with whom I was ever acquainted." Hoare's patrons at Bath included the Grenville family, and the elder Pitt, who for many years represented Bath in Parliament.

Pitt's portrait was painted by Hoare and the great statesman thought it an excellent likeness. George Grenville was another sitter and his portrait was so much admired by Pitt that he wanted a replica of it for himself. He writes to Grenville in August, 1746:—

"I have a request to you which I desire you will allow me to take for granted by not hearing a refusal, for which there cannot be time while I stay here. My request is that Mr. Hoare may copy a gentleman's picture which he lately drew, and which he will touch at London or elsewhere as occasion requires. I hope to find you looking just as you did when he and I had you under consideration."

In another letter from Bath Pitt describes to Grenville the progress of a monument to Captain Thomas Grenville which Prince Hoare the sculptor, William's brother, was designing. The sculptor practised at Bath, where he executed many portrait busts, among them one of Lord Chesterfield, of which the noble author of the *Letters* remarks to a correspondent in 1752 that "it is generally thought very like." Of Prince Hoare, who was the pupil of Scheemaker, little is known, but Vertue's description of him is attractive, "a tall, handsome, agreeable person, somewhat skilled in music." He was popular in Bath where he appears to have undertaken general decorative work. Lady Luxborough, writing to Shenstone, says of Prince Hoare that "although a statuary he deigns also to exercise his art in sculpture on humble paper ceilings, which are very handsome." This Prince Hoare should not be confounded with his better-known nephew of the same name (the son of William Hoare), who although a painter of a sort was more eminent as a writer, and succeeded Boswell as Secretary for Foreign Correspondence at the Royal Academy.

William Hoare, as Pitt's letter indicates, sometimes visited London professionally, and in 1751 he removed from Bath to the metropolis, where commissions awaited him and where he hoped that his increasing reputation would enable him to obtain constant employment. It was at this time that Hoare painted the portraits of his friends Lord and Lady Lincoln, and Mr. Pelham, but apparently his encouragement in London was insufficient. He returned to Bath where he was more prosperous than any other painter until, eight years later, Gainsborough settled in the western city. From that time his practice declined, but Bishop

Warburton suggests in one of his letters that the competition of the younger painter did not trouble him, probably because he could then afford to take things easily. Warburton, writing from Bath in 1762 to Charles Yorke, comments on the prolonged absence of Hoare, whose family was in daily expectation of his return. "He has been away all this autumn," he says, "at Lord Lincoln's, and suffers Gainsborough here to run away with all his business. But he is a good and he is a prudent man, so that I not only wish but hope the best for him."

It was probably during Gainsborough's residence at Bath, where he had settled nearly three years before the date of Warburton's letter, that he became acquainted with the work of Watteau, the influence of which is shown so strongly in his picture *The Mall, St. James's Park*. Gainsborough was not the first to feel this influence, which had asserted itself in England long before he went to Bath in 1759. Watteau's visit to London forty years earlier seems to have passed almost unnoticed by our painters, but about 1740 the appreciation of his art had become fairly general in this country. The elder Nollekens, the father of the sculptor, helped to make his work known, for he painted many copies of pictures by the famous Frenchman, and if J. T. Smith may be trusted, was actually his pupil. Philip Mercier was influenced by Watteau; and Charles Philips, for a time at least, attempted to work in his manner but on a much enlarged scale.

Charles Philips, to whom is now ascribed the picture of a group of small figures, *A Garden Party*, now in the National Gallery, was a fashionable painter of portraits and conversation pieces in the first half of the eighteenth century. His father, also a painter, was originally a milliner or linen-draper, who abandoned his trade to practise the arts, and in the early stages of his career devoted himself chiefly to the production of portraits in black lead pencil. The younger Philips, who was more successful than his father, and included Royalties among his sitters, imitated Hogarth and attained such a position that Vertue referred to him in 1733 as "one of the most elevated men in art" of the period. Further proof that he ranked high in contemporary opinion is to be found in the complimentary verses published in the magazines of the day, of which the following is a characteristic example. The writer who rhapsodizes on Philips was a clergyman named Pindar and the portrait he refers to was one of the fourth Earl of

Carlisle, the father of the Earl who was Sir Joshua's friend and pall-bearer:—

“Philips! with wonder all allow,
Thy hand hath shown what art can do;
Great Carlisle's form by thee exprest,
Lives in thy finished lines confest:
There light and shade so justly strike,
The more we view the more we like.
Let others boast the skill to trace
Some faint resemblance of a face;
'Tis thine, rare artist, to impart
The beauties that adorn the heart;
Oh! might my colours glow like thine,
And equal thus the great design!
Then would my grateful muse aspire
To sing those virtues all admire;
But who alas! can vainly hope
To rival thee, or sing like Pope?”

That Philips imitated Watteau as well as Hogarth is shown by a letter, still existing, written by him in 1743 to a patron living in the country who had asked him if he could repair a picture by another painter. In his reply Philips took the opportunity to offer for sale a picture of his own. “It is,” he says, “in the cast of Watteau, a pleasant picture nine foot high by twelve long, and will look as handsome as the best tapestry.” An earlier testimony to the vogue for Watteau is to be seen in the catalogue of a sale in 1739 of pictures by Old Masters and others imported by Andrew Hay.

Hay's catalogues were sometimes prefaced by an illustration, of which the one of 1725 reproduced as the frontispiece of this volume, is a good example. For the catalogue of 1739 he chose as illustration an engraving of a picture by Watteau of a man playing a lute, although no work by the painter figured in the sale. Hay, no doubt, found it difficult to obtain works by him at this time, owing to their popularity in France. Desenfans when he turned to picture dealing thirty or forty years later was surprised to find how rarely Watteau was represented in English galleries, and asked Sir Joshua Reynolds if he could give any reason for the deficiency. Was it that English collectors refused to buy the pictures by the French master?

"I wish," said Sir Joshua, "that it was so and that they would let me have them instead, for Watteau is a master I adore. He unites in his small figures, correct drawing, the spirited touch of Velasquez, and the colouring of the Venetian school. But Watteau is little known among us. His works being extremely dear on the Continent the brokers and dealers bring us over copies of his pictures, or those of his imitators, Lancret and Pater, which they impose upon us as originals."

Another testimony to Sir Joshua's admiration for the French painter has come down to us through his friend William Seward. "Watteau," he says, "was highly esteemed by the late Sir Joshua Reynolds. He possessed a landscape of Watteau which was as finely painted as if it had been the work of Claude himself." Sir Joshua owned several pictures by or ascribed to Watteau. One of them, according to Mr. D. S. MacColl, is the small panel now in the Wallace Collection, No. 377, *The Music Lesson*.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Canaletto arrives in London; "A sober man turned of fifty"; The Thames pictures at Goodwood; Paints the Lord Mayor's Show; Strange rumours; Is it the real Canaletto?; Enmity of the picture dealers; Vertue learns the truth; Exhibition of "A View in St. James's Park"; The picture bought by Lord Radnor; Painting at Chelsea; Canaletto's imitators in England, Baudin and Harding; Hollis the republican; His portrait of Milton; Canaletto paints Hollis, his friend and his servant; The picture of Whitehall; Andrea Casali and English country dances; Soldi's extravagance; His portrait of Roubiliac; Soldi buried by the Royal Academy; A disappointment for Hogarth; He curses the public and takes down the Golden Head; A trap for connoisseurs; Bogus Rembrandts; Hudson deceived by them; Giles Hussey; A supposed genius; "Idles his time in the country and talks of mighty things"; He discovers the "gross errors" of the Greek sculptors; Romney and Ozias Humphry go to see his drawings; Hussey's criticism of the ancients.

THE middle of the eighteenth century witnessed the arrival in England of Canaletto, a painter more eminent than any who had visited our shores since Watteau came to London in 1719. Walpole, unfortunately, thought little of Canaletto and placed him in a rank below Samuel Scott and William Marlow. In the *Anecdotes of Painting in England* Walpole gives but a dozen lines to the Venetian and in all his voluminous correspondence does not once mention his residence here. And, except in Canaletto's own advertisements, or those of his agents, I have seen only one mention of his name in contemporary newspapers, although he was in England, at various times, from 1746 to 1755 and painted many pictures here, some of which are important.

That Canaletto arrived in London in 1746 we know from Vertue's notes and from a letter quoted by the Duke of Richmond in *A Duke and his Friends*. The letter, written on May 20th, 1746, is addressed to the second Duke by his former tutor, Thomas Hill, and was written immediately after a dinner at the Duke of Montagu's, where Hill had met Owen McSwiney, whose earlier correspondence with the Duke of Richmond about the purchase of pictures by Canaletto and others is quoted in Chapter Two. McSwiney appears to have indulged himself too freely at the Duke of Montagu's table, but he was sufficiently sober to be able to convey to Hill some interesting news about the Italian painter. Hill says in his letter:—

"Canales, alias Canaletti, is come over with a letter of

recommendation from our old acquaintance the Consul of Venice to Mac, in order to his introduction to your Grace as a patron of the politer parts, or what the Italians understand by the name of *virtu*. I told him the best service I thought you could do him would be to let him draw a view of the river from your dining-room, which in my opinion would give him as much reputation as any of his Venetian prospects."

The windows of the Duke of Richmond's town house at Whitehall commanded fine views of the Thames and its banks, and from them Canaletto afterwards painted the two pictures of Whitehall and the river that are now at Goodwood. "Our old acquaintance the Consul of Venice" was Joseph Smith, an agent of the British Government in that city and an extensive dealer in Canaletto's works. It was from Smith's executors that George the Third purchased fifty paintings by the Venetian artist, and about three times as many drawings, all of which are still in the Royal collection.

Writing in the autumn of the year of Canaletto's arrival, Vertue speaks of him as in appearance "a sober man turned of fifty" and says it is rumoured that one reason for his visit is to invest his savings in England. His market in Venice had suffered because few English travellers went to Italy owing to the wars, and therefore by the advice of his fellow countryman, the painter Amiconi—who himself had prospered exceedingly in London—Canaletto had come to try his fortune in the country whose collectors had been his best patrons. Amiconi had told him of the pictorial possibilities of the Thames, of which, says Vertue, "he has begun some views."

He does not tell us the subjects of those first representations of the river and its banks, but probably the pictures executed for the Duke of Richmond were among the earliest efforts of Canaletto's brush in London. The first work of importance of the date of which we have any certain knowledge was a painting now in the possession of the Duke of Buccleuch, *The South-East Prospect of Westminster Bridge*. It represents the arrival at Westminster, by water, on October 29th, 1746, of the newly elected Lord Mayor; in the City Barge, and attended by those of the Companies and a multitude of boats of all sizes. This must have been begun and completed in the last months of 1746 as the engraving, "from a beautiful picture of Canaletti's," was published in the early spring of 1747 by John Brindley of New Bond

Street, the Prince of Wales's bookseller. The price of an ordinary print was only half a crown, but copies "coloured from the original painting" could be obtained by those prepared to pay a larger sum.

Another picture completed in the first eight or nine months of Canaletto's residence in England was *A View of the City of London through one of the Centers of the Arches of the New Bridge at Westminster*. The engraving, published early in June, 1747, was dedicated to Sir Hugh Smithson, for whom, no doubt, the picture was painted. Sir Hugh Smithson, afterwards the first Duke of Northumberland, was interested in painters and pictures, and, as will be seen later in this chapter, befriended Giles Hussey when he was stranded in Rome, gave him commissions, and helped him to return to England.

Vertue, after his remarks in 1746, says nothing more about Canaletto until the summer of 1749 when he mentions several of the pictures he has painted and refers to some rumours about him that were then current in London. They were to the effect that the artist who had been working here for more than three years was not the famous Venetian but an impostor who had assumed his name:—

"Signor Cannalretti from Venice having been in London some time, has painted several views about London, of the new bridge at Westminster and London Bridge and about Whitehall, in the country for the Duke of Beaufort, views of Badminton, etc. On the whole of him something is obscure or strange. He does not produce work so well done as those of Venice or other parts of Italy which are in collections here and done by him there. Especially his figures in his works done here are apparently much inferior to those done abroad which are surprisingly well done and with great freedom and variety, his water and his skies at no time excellent or with natural freedom, and what he has done here, his prospects of trees, woods, or handling or pencilling of that part not various or so skilful as might be expected. Above all he is remarkable for reservedness and shyness in being seen at work at any time or anywhere which has much strengthened a conjecture that he is not the veritable Cannalretti of Venice whose works there have been bought at great prices, or that privately he has some unknown assistant in making or filling up his pieces of works with figures."

We learn nothing from Vertue of the origin of these rumours, but an explanation of them that seems to be possible was given long afterwards by Edward Dayes, the water-colour painter, in a note on Canaletto's visit to England. Dayes, whose note was written in 1800 or thereabouts, was born a generation too late to have known Canaletto, but he had heard from older men of his treatment here, and he declares that it was the London picture dealers who set the injurious stories on foot. The dealers, says Dayes, trading on Canaletto's extraordinary popularity among English collectors, had accumulated stocks of copies of his pictures which they hoped to dispose of as originals. For them, therefore, his visit was most inopportune and they formed a combination to discredit him:—

"They carried their assurance so far as to deny that Canaletti was the person who painted his pictures at Venice, that is to say on his arrival in London; and when, by the provocation, he was tempted to sit down and produce some, to convince the public, they still persisted that the pictures now produced were not in the same style; an assertion which materially injured him for a time and made him almost frantic. By this scheme they hoped to drive him from the country, and thereby to prevent him from detecting the copies they had made from his work, which were in great repute."

But their efforts failed, as we see by a note written by Vertue at the end of July, 1749, in which he accepts the visitor as the true Canaletto and at the same time shows that some people in London had confounded the painter with his nephew and pupil, Bernardo Belotto. Vertue begins his note by stating that Canaletto has evidently been warned that his shyness about his work is detrimental to his interests, and that in consequence he has offered by advertisement to show an example of it at his lodgings; and then says of the confusion with Belotto:—

"At last after some time I heard how that difficulty was speaked about that this man was not the person so famed in Italy, at Venice. It seems that his name and family was Canali—so he always was called. He had a sister who had a son who having some genius was instructed by his uncle Canali and this young stripling by degrees came on forward in his profession, on being taken notice of for his improvement he was called Canaletti the young. But in time getting some degree of merit, he being puffed up amongst those of a natural genius

LORD RADNOR'S CANALETTO

to be distinguished, disobliged his uncle remarkably who turned him adrift. But he well imitating his uncle's manner of painting became reputed and the name of Canaletti was indifferently used by both uncle and nephew—from thence the uncle came to England and left the nephew at Venice. So that this caused the report of two Canalettis."

Canaletto's advertisement, which appeared in a London newspaper of July, 1749, is as follows:—

"Signor Canaletto hereby invites any gentleman that will be pleased to come to his house to see a picture done by him, being *A View of St. James's Park*, which he hopes may in some measure deserve their approbation. The said view may be seen from Nine in the Morning till Three in the Afternoon, and from Four to Seven in the evening for the space of fifteen days from the date of this advertisement. He lodges at Mr. Wiggan's, cabinetmaker, Silver Street, Golden Square."

The picture shown at Silver Street in 1749 appears to have been purchased by Lord Radnor, of Twickenham, whose friendly efforts on behalf of Hayman I have noticed in Chapter Five. Lord Radnor, who died in 1757, was an intimate friend of James Harris, a well-known scholar of his day. Writing to Harris not long before his death Lord Radnor mentions that he wishes to leave him two or three of his many pictures.

"I have some few," he says, "that I think are very good, therefore I could wish you here on that account, to mark two or three of those you mind the best, which may probably come soon to your share." A little later Lord Radnor writes again to say that he has selected two works for his friend, a Canaletto and a Hobbema. "The Canaletto, the subject being that part of St. James's Park towards the Horse Guards is, I think, the most capital picture I ever saw of that master." James Harris was the father of the first Earl of Malmesbury, from whose *Letters* the extracts quoted above are taken, and the picture, which has been in the possession of the family ever since, is in the collection of the present Earl, who has kindly allowed me to see it. Canaletto's *View of St. James's Park*, is, for him, on an unusually large scale, as it measures about eight feet in breadth by four in height. It shows the old Horse Guards, which was pulled down soon after it was painted, seen beyond the Parade and the grass of St. James's Park, with some of the houses of Downing Street near at hand on the right. The Park and Parade are dotted with groups of

characteristic figures, and in the middle distance a body of red-coated infantry is shown, marching past the Horse Guards. The picture is of singular interest and value as a representation of the London of its time.

In 1750 Canaletto returned for a time to Italy. He was absent from London for eight months, but in the summer of 1751 was at work again by the Thames and painting from the Battersea side a picture of the river and the opposite bank, showing Chelsea Hospital and its gardens, and the Rotunda at Ranelagh. This picture too he exhibited towards the end of July at the lodgings in Silver Street at which the *View in St. James's Park* was shown. The exhibition of 1751 was advertised in much the same terms as that of 1749 and probably in the same journal, but what that journal was I have been unable to discover. The date of Canaletto's second advertisement has been wrongly given as 1752 by H. B. Wheatley and others. Probably they were misled by Anderdon, who, writing as "Gondola" to *Notes and Queries* in 1854 to ask a question about Canaletto, quoted it as from a newspaper of 1752. Anderdon did not know what newspaper it appeared in as he copied the advertisement "from a curious collection of scraps in the sale room at Sotheby's," in which perhaps it was wrongly dated.

The picture of Chelsea Hospital and Ranelagh turned up unexpectedly at an auction room in 1921 and was purchased by Mr. Ayerst H. Buttery. It was afterwards shown at the Cotswold Gallery by Mrs. A. J. Finberg, the writer of the valuable and copiously illustrated article on Canaletto in England published in the same year in the Walpole Society's annual volume. The Chelsea picture is in perfect condition and so interesting that it is surprising to read in Vertue that it was only moderately well received. He says that sixty or seventy pounds was asked for the picture, which was thought to be no better than the works of some English artists, whose names, however, he does not give.

Vertue mentions among the imitators of Canaletto, Francis Harding the landscape and coach painter; and an artist whom he calls Bodin, who was perhaps one of the two Bodins included in his list of the students at Kneller's Academy in 1711. "Mr. Bodin," says Vertue, writing about 1744, "painter, watercolours fan painting formerly was his chief business, but of late years so much imitated Canaletto Views of Venice, having copied several and published prints of them." There can be little doubt, I

think, that Vertue misspells the artist's name and that his Bodin is identical with the "Mr. Baudin, painter" who in 1740 was living in Durham Yard, off the Strand. A visitor to Baudin's house at this time described him as "the Publisher of the Views of Venice in twelve beautiful prints," and extolled the politeness and civility of the artist, who showed him the paintings from which the engravings were made. "The masterly manner in which the vistles are executed," says the visitor, "and the exact likeness they bear to the originals, had so good an effect that I almost imagined myself to be once more taking a turn about Venice, which I left but three months ago." Canaletto's name is not mentioned in connection with the views although Vertue's implication is clear that Baudin only copied the Venetian master.

Harding, the other copyist mentioned by Vertue, could also imitate successfully the handling of Canaletto's rival, Panini, and was probably the painter whose widow, Mary Harding, received in 1769 a gratuity of three guineas from the charitable fund of the Royal Academy, on the recommendation of Richard Wilson. Harding and Bodin were very likely responsible for some of the numerous copies of Canaletto's work which Dayes says the picture dealers hoped to sell as originals. Vertue does not mention any English artist as working for Canaletto, but Edward Edwards says that William James the landscape painter was his pupil and assistant while he was in London.

Among English amateurs one of the best friends of Canaletto was Thomas Hollis, whose support of the arts in the eighteenth century has never been fully recognized. A wealthy man of cultivated tastes, he was the nephew of another Thomas Hollis, well known as a generous benefactor to Harvard University, to the library of which Canaletto's patron also made several gifts. Hollis, who was despised by Dr. Johnson for his democratic tendencies, was for the same reason unsympathetic to Horace Walpole, a man of more advanced views. Walpole describes him as "a gentleman of ample fortune; an antiquary, collector, of the most virtuous morals, and the most bigoted of all republicans, to a degree of being unwilling to converse with men of other principles. As I was not quite republican enough for him he would neither admit me to his house or enter mine." Johnson, carried away by political prejudice, describes Hollis as "a poor, dull creature," but he appears to have been, on the contrary, a highly intelligent and benevolent man, interested alike in art,

literature and politics; and in person, as William Cole says, "handsome, jolly, disposed to be fat, and of a cheerful disposition."

Canaletto was not the only Italian artist with whom he dealt. He gave numerous commissions to Cipriani, whose connection with him extended over many years, and he proposed Piranesi for membership of the Society of Antiquaries. Hollis was a member and an ardent supporter of the Society of Arts, and was for a time chairman of its Committee of the Polite Arts, that supervised the earliest English picture exhibitions.

His collection included nine Canalettos, but the picture of which he seems to have been proudest was Cornelius Johnson's portrait of Milton, when a boy. This portrait Hollis bought for thirty-one guineas at the sale of the collection of Charles Stanhope, who bought it for twenty guineas from the executors of the poet's widow. Several paintings by Richard Wilson were among Hollis's treasures. He made Wilson's acquaintance in Rome, where, in 1752, the artist painted his portrait, and painted also "on the spot and in the open air," a view of the Grotto at the Villa Madama, Rome. A landscape by Wilson was presented by Hollis to the British Museum.

Hollis may have met Canaletto for the first time in Venice, as he was there in the spring of 1751, and the artist, as Vertue tells us, was absent from London and staying in his native city for eight months in 1750-1. However, it was in London that Canaletto painted most, if not all, of the pictures owned by Hollis. Five of them, *The Interior of the Rotunda at Ranelagh*; *Walton Bridge*; *View of the Banqueting House, Whitehall*; *View of Westminster during the building of the Bridge*, and *A View of St. Paul's Cathedral*, were painted in London in 1754; and a sixth, the *View of the Capitol at Rome*, in 1755. To the *Walton Bridge* and the *View of the Capitol at Rome* some special interest appears to have been attached. In a very old, privately printed, catalogue of Hollis's pictures the first of these works is described as "A View of Walton Bridge, painted in London in 1754, for Mr. Hollis, by Canaletto. In this picture the portraits of Thomas Hollis, his friend Thomas Brand, his servant Francisco and his dog, Malta, are introduced." Of the second the catalogue says, "The Capitol at Rome, painted in London in 1755, at the desire of Thomas Hollis. In this picture also are the portraits of Thomas Hollis, Thomas Brand, Francisco and his dog." The servant, Francesco Giovannini, was a Roman

CANALETTO'S PICTURE OF WHITEHALL

whose acquaintance Hollis made at Venice, where he acted as "a kind of antiquary" to the English traveller and afterwards accompanied him to London.

Hollis died in 1774 and bequeathed most of his property, including his pictures, to his friend Thomas Brand, afterwards known as Thomas Brand Hollis, of The Hyde, Essex, who, dying thirty years later, left the Canalettos to the Rev. John Disney, D.D. They remained in the possession of the Disney family until 1884, when they were sold at Christie's, and two are now in public collections. The *Interior of the Rotunda at Ranelagh* is at the National Gallery, and the *Walton Bridge* at the Dulwich Gallery, to which it was presented by Miss E. Murray Smith. On the backs of these pictures Canaletto wrote in his own hand statements that he painted them in 1754 "for the first and last time with all possible care" for his patron Hollis. Both inscriptions were necessarily hidden when the pictures were relined in 1850, but copies were affixed to the backs by their then owner, John Disney the younger, the founder of the Disney Professorship of Archæology at Cambridge.

Canaletto's advertisements, to which I have referred, gave his address as Silver Street, Golden Square; but he also lodged near Whitehall during part of his residence in London. A reviewer of the exhibition at the British Institution in 1840, where one of his pictures, the Duke of Buccleuch's *Whitehall*, was exhibited, said of it, "the view is taken from the present corner of Richmond Terrace and Parliament Street, where Canaletto lodged." This statement about the painter's lodgings is confirmed in *Barthomley*, a book published in 1856 by the Rev. Edward Hinchliffe, grandson of that Bishop Hinchliffe who introduced the youthful J. T. Smith to Gainsborough. Barthomley is a parish in Cheshire with which the Hinchliffes were long connected and their family history is sketched in the book. The author says that when Bishop Hinchliffe was a young man he went to Venice, about 1760, as tutor to Mr. Crewe (great-grandfather of the present Marquis of Crewe) and there made the acquaintance of Canaletto, at whose house he saw the above-mentioned picture of Whitehall. Canaletto assured Hinchliffe that he had refused to sell the picture in England because he wished to keep it as a memento of his visit to that country. It represented the view seen "from the garret of a little shop on the site of what is now the corner house of Richmond Terrace," a little shop above which

he lodged. However, Mr. Crewe prevailed upon the artist to sell him the view of Whitehall, which he brought to England and afterwards gave to Bishop Hinchliffe in exchange for another picture. From the Bishop the Canaletto passed by inheritance to his son, John Henry Hinchliffe, in whose possession it remained until 1836, when it was sent to a sale at Christie's and bought in for 560 guineas. In the following year it was exhibited in the Pall Mall Gallery, together with pictures by Reynolds, Gainsborough and Turner, and its history was sketched in a note in the catalogue. The picture was much admired and more than one critic declared that it should be bought for the National Gallery. It must have been soon after the exhibition at the Pall Mall Gallery that this famous work was sold by the Hinchliffe family to the Duke of Buccleuch—for a thousand guineas according to the writer of a paragraph in the *Art Union* of 1840.

It is not known when Canaletto returned to Italy for good, but he was certainly working in London as late as 1755. The statement to this effect in the catalogue of the Hollis collection was confirmed in 1925, when a drawing of Walton Bridge made for Mr. Dicker, by whom the bridge was built, was sold at Christie's, signed, and dated 1755, by Canaletto's hand.

Canaletto was something of a recluse in England, but his retired life was no doubt of his own choosing, for his fellow-countryman Andrea Casali, an artist infinitely inferior, was admitted to the society of lords and ladies on level terms. A glimpse of Casali at an English country house is given in a letter to the Countess of Pomfret from her daughter, Lady Charlotte Fermor, a haughty damsel who speaks contemptuously of the probable low birth of the painter although she seems to have gone out of her way to amuse him. She writes in October, 1743, from Copt Hall, which had lately been refurnished and Casali was decorating with paintings:—

“After supper we all danced to our own singing in order to teach Signor Cassali (an Italian they have in the house) English country dances. . . . He is a painter and I fancy as low born as they generally are, though by means of an order he wears, set in diamonds (which he tells them was given him by the King of Prussia, and which very few people can have), and some fine suits of clothes, he passes for the most complete fine gentleman in the world and is treated upon an equal footing with the rest of their company. He is painting a picture

for the salon and I believe well done. . . . They tell me he paints more in two hours than any of his profession can do in a day."

Andrea Casali, whom Vertue describes as "an ingenious, well-behaved man," had enjoyed in Italy the friendship and society of another member of the aristocracy, Henry, fourth Earl of Carlisle. Vertue says that when the Earl met Casali in Rome he was "so extremely courteous to him and so taken with his works that he visited him daily, taking him into his coach and company almost constantly," but that he neglected the Italian when he settled in London, where, however, the artist enjoyed prosperity for many years and carried off several of the most important prizes offered by the Society of Arts. Lord Carlisle only came to see him once, to ask his price for a whole-length portrait, and when Casali mentioned fifty pounds, "his Lordship held up his hands and went away."

The portrait painter Soldi, another Italian contemporary of Canaletto in England, shared Casali's weakness for wishing to figure in society as a fine gentleman. Soldi, a Florentine who came to London about 1735, after travelling for some time in the East, acquired here a large and fashionable connection in portraiture. Unlike most of his English rivals, he was a skilful painter of drapery and he became so popular that he held his own in opposition even to Vanloo. But Soldi was vain and extravagant, and although commissions were never wanting his expensive habits brought him to a debtor's prison in 1744, in which year Vertue writes:—

"Soldi the painter, by his merit and the interest of friends has had considerable business, lived well, kept house, a Madam, etc., entertainments, which expenses put him under difficulties, running in debt and behindhand; at present his creditors, some of them, prosecuted him to the Fleet (Prison) where he is now under composition. But his high mind and conception, grandisses—willing to be thought a Count or Marquis rather than an excellent painter—such wild vauntings have done him no good and in this case will make it more difficult to submit to his creditors' terms.

"Upon this occasion some friends of his, finding he has business in hand begun for nobility and others, if a brace of hundreds and prospects of going on were enough, if he can make any abatement to his pride or expenses some hopes he

may be re-established. The only singular affectation of thinking himself above the dignity of a painter, in his birth or parentage will be a check on his diligence and promoting his interest to get above necessity and beforehand—he can't relish his friends at certain times commending his skill in the art he professes, he would rather have the world believe he does them honour when he paints for them. This is his foible. By his conduct he says he has spent £7000 since he came to England, which he brought with him."

Obviously it was hard to serve a man of Soldi's nature, but his friends got him out of prison somehow, and he recovered much of his practice and painted a portrait of Gibbs the architect soon after his release. Vertue when announcing in 1751 that Soldi has painted Roubiliac, compliments the Italian on his portraits generally. He says that they are "freely and well drawn, the colouring fine and very natural; he is certainly a painter of superior merit in the portrait way, very light and airy." Nevertheless he was penniless when he died twenty years later, and only the charitable fund of the Royal Academy saved him from a pauper's grave. The cost of Soldi's funeral was advanced by Sir Joshua Reynolds out of his own pocket.

Vertue tells us nothing of Soldi after 1751 and in the notes of that year his last reference to Hogarth is also to be found. He mentions him as "being after projecting schemes to promote his business in some extraordinary manner," and these schemes, as we know, related to the disposal of the six pictures of *The Marriage à la Mode*, now in the National Gallery. Anxious to get a good price for these works, upon the frames of which alone he had spent a considerable sum, and over-confident of public support, Hogarth announced that they would be on view for a month. During this time any prospective purchaser could write on a slip of paper the sum that he was prepared to offer for the set and on a certain day the tenders would be examined and the pictures allotted to the highest bidder. Unfortunately there was but one tender, made by Mr. Lane of Hillingdon, and on the day appointed Hogarth, after waiting until three o'clock in the hope of further bids, delivered the pictures to him. It was a cruel blow to the painter's vanity, but he kept his temper until Mr. Lane departed, and said to him on leaving, "If you are satisfied with the purchase, I am abundantly so with the purchaser."

This is what we are told by Hogarth's biographers, but from

Vertue we learn what happened after Mr. Lane left the house. "The sale," he says, "so mortified Hogarth's high spirit and ambition that it threw him into a rage, and he cursed and damned the public and swore they had all combined together to oppose him. By this his haughty carriage or contempt of the other artists may now be his mortification, and on that day following, in a pet, he took down the Golden Head that stood as a sign above his door."

A Golden Head such as Hogarth took down was frequently used as a sign by London artists in the eighteenth century. Sir Robert Strange used it at his house in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden; and in 1754 Major, the engraver, advertised his prints from the Golden Head in Chandos Street. The sign appears to have been common in some districts, as Wilding the miniature painter, advertising from Sutton Street, Soho Square, in 1766, adds a warning:—"N.B. Wilding over the door, there being another Golden Head in the same Street."

In the year of the sale of the *Marriage à la Mode* Hogarth was one of the supporters of Benjamin Wilson in an ingenious scheme to render ridiculous certain artists and amateurs who imagined themselves to be connoisseurs of Rembrandt's etchings. In 1751 there was a wave of enthusiasm for these etchings, and some of the great artist's admirers who, as Vertue says, "collected all the wild scrabbles, scratches, etc., done by him or thought to be done by him," boasted that they had knowledge of everything that had come from the master's hand and could not be deceived. Among these confident ones was Hudson the painter, who at a sale of Rembrandt drawings and etchings came into collision with a brother artist, Benjamin Wilson. Both were anxious to acquire a certain drawing, which ultimately fell to Hudson after a sharp contest. The competition of Wilson was resented by Hudson, who had been obliged to pay a stiff price for his purchase, and he addressed his rival with extreme discourtesy after the sale.

Wilson, who had recently taken Kneller's former residence in Great Queen Street and had thus become the near neighbour of Hudson, made no answer to his attack at the time. But he determined to take what he called "a pleasant revenge," and, suspicious of Hudson's claims as a connoisseur, made a plan to deceive him with an imitation Rembrandt etching. The story of his success is told in the life of Sir Robert Wilson, the artist's

son, whose biographer, Randolph, adapted it from the unpublished memoirs of Benjamin Wilson.

"There was," says Randolph, "a very rare etching of Rembrandt's called *The Companion to the Coach*. Wilson obtained a sight of this, observed it closely, and made a drawing and then an etching of it from memory. One great difficulty was to obtain the sort of India paper which Rembrandt used, but Wilson's resources did not fail him; he suspected the cause of the great thickness of the paper to be that more sheets than one were pasted together and pressed. In order to test this he obtained a portion of Rembrandt's paper and soaked it in hot water, when it separated at once into four or five leaves. Having thus obtained the means of carrying out his plans he struck off a print from his etching, wrote in Dutch upon it *The Companion to the Coach*, and sent it in a portfolio with a number of genuine Rembrandts, by a Dutchman, to Mr. Hudson's for sale. Mr. Hudson immediately purchased it and told Mr. Herring (nephew to the Archbishop of Canterbury) and others, that it was the best piece of perspective and the finest light and shade he had ever seen by Rembrandt."

Wilson then took Hogarth into his confidence, and Hogarth suggested as the next victim a well-known printseller named Harding who, like Hudson, had the reputation of being a first-rate connoisseur. An old man's head in Rembrandt's manner was etched by Wilson, and this was offered to Harding at his shop in St. Martin's Lane by the same Dutchman. The printseller was favourably impressed by the etching and begged leave to keep it until the following evening, when he too fell into the trap. The Dutchman had asked two guineas for the supposed Rembrandt and this was paid by Harding, with the addition of a bottle of wine, and a request that he might have the first offer if the seller came across any more etchings of a similar kind. Sir Edward Dering, whom Wilson had admitted to the conspiracy, now begged for a print to show Lord Duncannon; and his Lordship and Dr. Chauncey, both connoisseurs, were easily deceived. Even the famous Mr. Arthur Pond, "the greatest or top virtuosi in London," was ensnared by the sham Rembrandts.

Their author now thought that the joke had been carried far enough and decided to spend the money obtained for the prints on a supper, at which he would reveal the artifice. Accordingly he invited twenty-three artists to what he called "an English

roast," and when Hogarth had seated himself on Wilson's right hand and Hudson on his left the principal dish, a large sirloin of beef, was carried in adorned not with horseradish or parsley but with numerous skewers, each of which supported one of the "Rembrandt" prints. Hudson, who until this moment had no idea that he had been deceived, did not realize the meaning of the decorated dish until Hogarth, leaning forward, stuck a fork into one of the etchings and handed it to him. Wilson had fully expected that Hudson, when he saw the joke, would have laughed as the rest did, but this was not the case. His anger was intense and he expressed it in such language that his host determined to carry the matter a stage further than he had originally intended. Wilson therefore informed Hudson that from that moment he would do all he could to make the story of the deception known, and that he should publish the prints. These were offered for sale at the price of sixpence for the landscape and a shilling for the head and the demand for them was so great that both plates were almost worn away by frequent printing.

In all the stories of the quarrels and rivalries and junketings of these mid-eighteenth-century artists, one name never appears; that of the solitary and mysterious Giles Hussey, of whose supposed extraordinary gifts James Barry in after years was never tired of prating. He complained that Hussey, when he returned to England after studying in Italy, received so little encouragement "that after much struggling he retired with disgust from an art in which no man was ever better qualified to succeed. He had talents which would have done honour to the best ages of Greece and Italy. The purity and elegance of his taste, his deep knowledge of all the parts which compose the human figure, and the fidelity and precision of his drawing, ought to have gained him admirers, patrons and friends—and would have done so in any other country in the world." Barry, who regarded himself as a genius unappreciated by his contemporaries, naturally writes with sympathy of a man whose position he considered similar to his own. But it does not appear that he ever knew Hussey, which was unfortunate, for the meeting should have been amusing between two men, each so full of theories of art.

But Vertue, who met Hussey while that artist was still a comparatively young man, was better able than Barry to judge the cause of his failure; and he ascribes it to idleness rather than

to lack of encouragement. Giles Hussey, who was the son of a Dorset country gentleman, was sent to Italy to study at the age of twenty and remained there for seven years. As a student he was successful. He won prizes at the Academy at Bologna, and according to the stories that reached England was regarded by the Italian professors as a man of exceptional promise. Vertue when recording Hussey's successes abroad speaks hopefully of his future, but admits afterwards that he proved disappointing. In the spring of 1738 Vertue writes:—

“Mr. Hussey who has a genius for drawing (which appeared before he went abroad) now he has returned has not in several months done no one piece of painting or work, but idles his time in the country with relations, sketches a little—begins but makes no conclusion—talks of mighty things. Which relations say of him that he is a wrong-headed creature, though good understanding. A strong memory, draws by the force of that persons without sitting.”

Walpole, in a note lately published by Dr. Toynbee, says on the authority of Hussey's patron, Duane, that he was sent to Rome by his father with an allowance of only £60 a year; that he drew there for several years and “was just proceeding to colour when his father died, who having been told that his son would grow idle if possessed of a fortune, altered his will and left him nothing, not even the exhibition of £60. The Duke of Northumberland and other English at Rome raised a sum to send him home.” Vertue says that he remained in the country for two or three years after his return from Italy, and then came to London and began to paint portraits in oil.

It was not until 1745 that the engraver had an opportunity of talking to the shy artist. “I waited on him,” he says, “with a gentleman of his singular acquaintance, in hopes, besides seeing and conversing with him, to review some of his productions, the work of so renowned a genius. Much discourse we had upon the subjects of the art of drawing, and concerning the ancient artists of the Greeks and Romans, and of their skill and knowledge in the most sublime degree.” Hussey assured his visitor that the study of ancient statues had shown him that there were many gross errors in the most famous of these works, and that he had discovered that the ancient Greek sculptors had no rule or certain regular proportions for human statues. This, he said, he discovered at Rome, and demonstrated there and at Bologna,

that the Italian artists had expressed their surprise that so many years had elapsed before it had been noticed:—

“He mentioned the antique statue of Hercules—he said faulty—the Venus of Medici also, the Laocoon and his two sons; the Gladiator, the most perfect statue of all, he thinks, yet still faulty in proportion, and in the portions and muscles; that the ancients did not study nature for the most famous statues, but a manner or taste, a custom, etc., by a licence rare and commendable, not intelligible to after ages. So thinks he of Apelles, Protogenes and other painters of the greatest reputation.”

This critic of the Greeks then spoke of a more important discovery that he had made, of “a true scheme, method, rule or mystery to himself only known; whereby he could demonstrate, teach, and also instruct others, to know and perform in delineations, drawings of human nature in a certain and almost infallible correction.” This secret method of drawing, which was “by triangles, or triangular or trigonometry,” Hussey had demonstrated in part before several persons of genius and honour, and in particular the Duke of Rutland, but had received no encouragement from any of them; and he had now come to the conclusion that England was not by nature suited to encourage the arts—except in portraiture—as other countries abroad were. He had only done one or two paintings for Sir Hugh Smithson who had given him commissions when in Italy, “and when,” says Vertue, “we did desire to see with due respect some of his performances, he answered that he had nothing done or doing to show us; and soon he intended to return into the country (his mother being in Dorsetshire) to wait for better times, or go abroad and seek his fortune elsewhere.”

A long conversation with Hussey left Vertue a little confused, and uncertain whether he had grasped correctly the meaning of the theories set forth by this “renowned genius.” “I wish,” he says, doubtfully, “I could have writ down his observations as he mentioned them. But if I am right in my guess (he has been thought to be toucht) I really believe he does believe what he says; and that if others can’t he does adopt all his conceits to his own schemes and way of thinking.”

Soon after this talk with Hussey his visitor managed to see one of his works, “a drawing with the pen most neatly and curiously done, in the possession of Dr. Mead, about as big as

the palm of my hand." This drawing, made from a bust of Homer, struck Vertue as well enough done, but he thought the skill it displayed might have been acquired without studying for years at Rome and Bologna as Hussey had. He knew scholars under twenty who could have equalled it in skill and neatness and merit. Vertue's interview with Hussey took place when the artist was about thirty-five, and he describes him as "a good looking person of a man, but passive, indolent, inactive and low spirited."

Ozias Humphry, who, with Romney and Paine the architect, went many years afterwards to see Duane's collection of Hussey's drawings from the antique, was much impressed by them. "His finished heads from gems," he says, "are most exquisitely beautiful and wrought up with inimitable perfection—among them are to be most highly admired a head of Mithridates, the Antinous; a Hercules, most beautiful . . . one of a Syrian King, from a coin, a model of the highest order of beauty."

Hussey's opinion on the treatment of the gems from which he was so fond of drawing, and on the invention and ideals of the sculptors of antiquity, are set forth by him in a letter of advice to Wray the seal cutter, written from Beaston, near Ashburton, in December, 1756:—

"All I would have you comprehend is that the ancient and modern seals are all done on a principle that affords less pleasure and variety than the subject really admits of; and therefore there is room for much improvement in your art.

"A direct profile, though exquisitely drawn, is generally something without a meaning; it cannot express properly the passions of the mind because they are soft or violent commotions arising from grief or joy, during which it is a pain for the body or head to be at rest. A direct profile rather expresses a suspension of the powers, which may be occasioned by fear, surprise, sleep or deep meditation, in all of which a spectator finds himself very little interested.

"But whoever attempts the more affecting passions must use much reason in finding their just definitions. Le Brun has given us caricatures of the passions drawn from ignoble originals of French extraction. Noble minds afford more dignified expressions, and virtuous minds an idea of divine perfection; if we have not a just idea of virtue and of the bounds which it prescribes to all passions we shall easily fall into theatrical affectation.



Drawing from an Antique Gem

By Giles Hussey

“The ancients had a nobler idea of form than the moderns, so far as it regards a human character, which at best is heroic in pursuit of its vices; but they had no idea of the divine form or character, in which is summed up an expression of all virtues. In Jupiter there is a savage majesty, with strong indications of a lascivious disposition; the same is observed in their Apollos, Bacchus’s etc.; their Venus speaks the harlot at first view; Minerva has a sullen composure, an Amazonian fierceness; Juno is a termagant.

“There is nothing but what is forbidding in the physiognomy of the ancient gods—Antinous is an effeminate beauty of the carnal sort; Hercules the most masculine of the same. Innocence, meekness, cleanness of heart, justice of the interior, compassion, peace, etc., I have never found among the ancient works of art; and it seems to me they must either not have known or despised these virtues; because all their gods were vicious and it was natural to them to esteem and approve the ideas of vice which the examples of the gods encouraged them to indulge.”

CHAPTER EIGHT

George Vertue's boyhood; Meets Vandyck's granddaughter, Mrs. Carbonnel; She lends him Vandyck's drawings to copy; Frederick, Prince of Wales and Vertue; The Prince's character; Vertue invited to Carlton House; A lover of the arts; The Royal dessert; Little Princes as waiters; Sir Luke Schaub; Charles the First's tapestries; The Prince at breakfast in the garden pavilion; a proposed Royal Academy; Vertue at Leicester House; The pictures there; General Guise; A visit to Kew Palace; The Prince's hospitality; His amazing memory; A patient wife; The Prince and Vertue visit the collections at Kensington and Hampton Court; "Every picture curiously examined"; A miniature Parnassus at Kew; Commissions for Vertue; His brighter prospects; Sudden death of the Prince; Vertue's despair and death; Dr. Ducarel on Vertue and his religion; His missing note-books?

THE last notes of importance written by Vertue record with considerable detail the history of his connection with Frederick, Prince of Wales, a connection upon which he built high hopes that were never to be realized. Always a hardworking and conscientious student, Vertue in early life had undertaken the entire support of his mother and her younger children, a duty to which he was compelled by the death of his father. "I was the eldest," he says, simply, "and then the only one that could help them; which added circumspection in my affairs then, as well as industry to the end of my life."

Walpole in telling the story of the engraver's boyhood in his *Life of Mr. George Vertue* does not mention an incident which seems to connect him with a greater period of art than that in which he lived. About 1698, when Vertue was thirteen or fourteen, he received his first lessons in drawing at a house the situation of which he does not specify. Nor does he say who was his teacher, but in the house lived a lady, Mrs. Carbonnel, who took a friendly interest in the boy. "She showed me," he says, "many drawings that had been part of Vandyck's as they then told me, and she was so kind as to lend me some of them to draw after." Mrs. Carbonnel was Vandyck's granddaughter.

It does not appear that Vertue often enjoyed long-continued prosperity, although he made many friends among the rich, and from time to time secured good commissions in his profession of engraver. But there are suggestions of straitened means in his occasional complaints of the cost which he could ill afford of attending the clubs and social gatherings of artists, where alone

could be obtained some of the information that he loved to gather. In 1748, when he first attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales, Vertue was a man of sixty-five. He was getting old, and death had removed some of his best friends and supporters; and among them unfortunately the Earl of Oxford, at once a patron and a kindred spirit, with whom in happy days long past he had made many summer tours in England, driving in the Earl's coach from one place to another of artistic or archæological interest.

Frederick, Prince of Wales, the son of George the Second and the father of George the Third, was a man of whom few historians have found anything good to say. Even Lord Hervey who admits that the Prince was handicapped by having "a father that abhorred him, a mother that despised him, sisters that betrayed him, and a brother set up against him," refuses him all sympathy on the ground that he had not a grain of merit. Lord Hervey may be right, but reading Vertue's narrative it is hard to believe that a man could have been wholly bad who treated the old engraver with so much courtesy and generosity; and found some of his chief pleasures in gardening and the collection of works of art, of the history of which he seems to have possessed considerable knowledge.

The Prince liked to have about him men of tastes that corresponded with his own, and when rumours of Vertue's learning reached his ears he invited the engraver to attend him at Carlton House on November 22nd, 1748. The summons was obeyed joyfully and between the Prince and his visitor, says Vertue, "much conversation ensued on the subject of paintings, drawings, pictures, artists, etc., there being with him at the same time two noblemen and the Prince's secretary, Schrader. He showed me his limnings and discoursed for three hours at least, and at my departure expressed his pleasure in commending my endeavours, and said also that he would come to my house to see my works and curiosities. Which I took as a great honour intended, but begged his Highness to believe it would not answer his trouble. 'Yet,' he said, 'I will come.'"

He was as good as his word. Schrader wrote soon afterwards to tell Vertue of the appointed day, upon which, at one o'clock, the Prince arrived in an open Sedan chair, accompanied by Lord Crawford and Sir Luke Schaub. Sir Luke, a prominent diplomatist of the time and an ardent collector of pictures, was a man

upon whose judgment the Prince placed reliance, but Walpole declares that many of Schaub's supposed treasures were nothing but old copies that had been palmed off on him in Spain. Two or three hours were spent by the Prince and his friends at Vertue's house in looking over his collection and in examining some manuscript catalogues of the pictures that had belonged to Charles the First, in whose footsteps as a patron of the arts the heir to the Throne wished to tread. He bought several drawings and prints from Vertue and said that he should come again to see him and bring more of his friends.

However, there was no second visit, but soon another letter came from Schrader inquiring about some tapestries which had belonged to Charles the First and were then in the market, and commanding Vertue to wait upon the Prince the same evening after dinner at Carlton House. "Where," he says, "when I came I was immediately introduced to their Royal Highnesses, who had just dined; both still sitting at their table waiting their fruit and dessert being brought in, and there stood waiting near them the two young Princes, having each a little napkin on their arms. They stayed for some time and his Royal Highness was so kind as to mention to them who I was and that he would show them some of my curious works." The elder Prince, then eleven years old, was afterwards George the Third; and his brother that Duke of Gloucester who in later life married Horace Walpole's niece, the Countess Waldegrave.

"Then," continues Vertue, "there was also Sir Luke Schaub standing by his Royal Highness in great conversation about his Royal pictures and other curiosities; and in turn his Royal Highness spoke to me about such things and after some time said to me:—'I have sent for you to show you such curiosities as I have now here, that you would not expect to see, and I want you to explain or inform me of some particulars relating thereunto.' So, rising from the table he said 'Come, come along,' to Sir Luke and to myself." The Prince led his visitors into a room adjoining, in which he kept some of his rarest examples. "See," he said, "here is the limning of the Earl of Arundell's family you mentioned to me—see how rare and admirable. Pray who are the persons herein mentioned—by the way I think the limning is a little faded—but go on." And Vertue, who had engraved a private plate of the group for the Duke of Norfolk, described to the eager collector the persons represented. The Prince then

produced a fine shield, "painted with several Roman stories of heroes," that had once belonged to the great Earl of Surrey; and after discussing this, and several pictures, miniatures and enamels, the party returned to the dining-room where the Princess, who was waiting for her husband to finish his dessert, greeted the visitor with much politeness:—

"Her Royal Highness obligingly spoke to me and asked me how I liked some of those curious pictures, and spoke to me severally about them whilst his Highness was conversing with Sir Luke; and in turn with me of many pictures in collections of noble and curious persons. Likewise for reasons the Prince then told me he desired that I would inquire about certain tapestries, formerly King Charles's with the arms of the Prince of Wales, the Loves of the Gods, etc.; and about some curious pictures I had mentioned to him in the possession of a Gent., and one particularly if the Gent. would send it to him to see; that I would go with the Prince's compliments to him and desire the favour of seeing it. And thus continued there about two hours."

The tapestries, which the Prince afterwards acquired, were Flemish, and twenty-two in number. Seven of them, after Rubens, were made to the order of Charles the First; the others, after Titian, were presented to him by the Infanta. When the King's effects were sold the tapestries were disposed of abroad, and were for some time at Venice, in the hands of a man named Lawes. Before the Prince bought them they had been offered in vain to George the Second (when Prince of Wales) and Queen Caroline.

The engraver left Carlton House with a warning that he was to hold himself in readiness to attend at Leicester House, which stood on the north side of what is now Leicester Square and was at that time the property of the Prince of Wales, who kept many of his pictures there. He said that of these he himself would be the showman, as he doubted if Sir Luke Schaub, who was also commanded to attend, could perform that office perfectly. But the Prince was so much interested in Vertue's conversation that before the visit to Leicester House could be arranged he sent a footman to fetch him, one day, early in the morning. It was July, and fine summer weather, and the Prince and Princess were breakfasting in a pavilion in the garden of Carlton House, close to the gate of St. James's Park. Here the Prince talked for a long

time about the condition of the arts in England, and the famous pictures that had been in the country formerly. He referred also to the Raphael cartoons and to the paintings by Rubens in the Banqueting House; and discussed a scheme for founding in England an Academy for drawing and painting. No doubt the scheme was that of Robert Dingley, to which I shall make further reference.

Vertue was summoned in due course to Leicester House, where he arrived at ten o'clock, but did not at first see the Prince who had left word that as he was obliged to go to Kew that morning with the Princess, Sir Luke Schaub would show the pictures. This was disappointing, but when Vertue had walked through some of the larger rooms with Sir Luke the Prince made his appearance, and conducted them to his private apartments, saying that he had there some of the pictures of which he was most proud.

Once embarked on his favourite topic of conversation the Prince soon forgot all about his journey to Kew. He showed Vertue a picture by Guido, and two by Andrea del Sarto—an artist he admired prodigiously; and then his bronzes, bas-reliefs and carvings. "I have something of every kind," he said, "because I love arts and curious things," and leading the way back into the larger rooms he began to criticize the pictures that Sir Luke had already shown to Vertue. "To one after another he went on, still repeating his observations, and esteemed each master's work in proper and significant terms and expressions, which is plain evidence of his application and knowledge and skill in these histories and works of eminent masters." Nor was he checked by the appearance of the Princess, dressed in her riding-habit and ready to proceed into the country. This obvious hint passed unnoticed by her husband who, thinking of nothing but his pictures, continued to comment upon them one after another until he came to the ante-room at the head of the grand staircase; and even there lingered "a convenient time in conversation" while his neglected wife stood close by them talking to one of the gentlemen of her suite.

The clock striking twelve suddenly recalled the Prince to a sense of his marital duties. "He turned about, and to her Highness said 'Well, now, we'll go if you are ready.' The Prince, parting, says, 'Vertue, good-bye to you,' and the Princess passing by me, said, 'Mr. Vertue, how do you do?' I made my obeisance

and thanked her Royal Highness, when they passed down the grand staircase into the hall. The Prince went in one chair, the Princess in another, and so to Carlton House and from thence through the Park to Kew." It seems hard to believe that the wife of the heir to the throne whose gracious courtesy charmed Vertue in 1750 was the same Princess of Wales at whose funeral the London mob shouted for joy in 1772.

At Leicester House Vertue noticed among other works of art the famous portrait group of Carew and Killigrew by Vandyck; and, hanging on the walls of the staircase, several pictures by his friend Wootton of the sieges conducted in Flanders by the Duke of Marlborough. Later in the summer he gives us another glimpse of the interior of the Royal residence:—

"I was sent for to come to Leicester House to see the family piece painted by Vandyck lately purchased in Flanders, and bought by the Prince of Wales and just brought over. The Prince came purposely from Clifden, his country house, to see it. Then I had the opportunity of seeing the Princess's dressing room which is adorned with the limnings only of Mr. Joseph Goupy in curious carved frames and glasses, consisting mostly of several most valuable pictures in collections here that he has copied; all being the work of Mr. J. Goupy, which I understand his Royal Highness purchased at one from him, and has taken him into his favour and uses his advice and Sir Luke Schaub's in most of his purchases of pictures, with General Guise, etc."

General Guise was a soldier who had fought in several campaigns and had served in the Foot Guards under Marlborough. Vertue describes him as a lover of painting who collected "pieces of the greatest Italian masters only, and chiefly pictures in their best manner, sparing no price when they are excellent. Many of these he bought himself in foreign parts and brought over. Amongst the fine pictures, which all the virtuosi visit, they much admire a fine work by Salvator Rosa, a fine Poussin, a Claude Lorraine, a Rubens—landscapes. Figures of Parmigiano, a noble and most valuable picture by Domenichino; many others of great price and scarce, also a head finely painted by Rubens on board, which I take to be Ben Jonson." The General left his collection to Oxford and Walpole says that the University entrusted them for renovation to the hands of the son of Bonus the picture cleaner, and that he "entirely repainted and entirely spoilt" many of them.

In the following year Vertue received an account of the pictures in the possession of the Prince of Wales, written by the hand of their owner, and the description of the preparation of the list proves not only that the Prince was sincerely interested in the fine arts but that he possessed a memory of uncommon quality. He appointed a day in the autumn of 1750 for Vertue to go to his house at Kew, where the Prince and Princess were then staying, to meet the librarian and to examine the prints and sculptures with a view to preparing a catalogue. At Kew the engraver was hospitably received. The Princess was as amiable there as she had been at Leicester House; and her husband in person ordered dinner for his guest and when it was finished called him into his own dining-room and returned to the subject of his collection of pictures.

During the conversation Vertue spoke of the compilation of a complete list of the Royal pictures; and the Prince, calling at once for pen and paper, and still sitting at the dinner table:—

“ . . . began to write down the names of all his most capital works at Leicester House; beginning with his dressing room, then the State-room, gallery, ante-chamber, etc., writing down every picture distinctly, not only those at Leicester House, but several of the most valuable that were then at his other houses, Kew, Pall Mall (Carlton House) and Clifden. This filled a whole sheet of paper, four sides, all by memory. After this he spoke of some fine pictures now abroad that he had given commissions to purchase in France, and had sent over a skilful ingenious artist to negotiate that affair; at the same time mentioning some rare and excellent pictures at Windsor, which he often visits—observes that those that are there remain (to be mentioned) and calling for another sheet of paper began to write down for my information such pictures at Windsor Castle; in the several rooms, lodges, galleries and apartments, from room to room writing down each particular picture, name of master and the story of portrait represented. He was surely above one and a half or nearly two hours writing swiftly, and all this by memory, and when done he gave the sheets to me for my use.”

His task finished, to the relief of the patient Princess, who had remained at her husband's side all the time he was writing, the Prince offered Vertue a bed if he chose to stay the night at

Windsor Castle.

Over the Chimney — Raphael
 Over the door — Julio Romano

In the little dressing room — Charles Queen & Dick

Over the chimney — The John of Uffice — ^{on the} ~~the~~

Over a door — Mary — ^{the} ~~the~~ Pitts

Choir — { 2 Michel Strog
 1 Paul Veronese
 2. Hylbein
 1. Larmeran
 W. Charles I. Charles I.
 of Desmond

Long Gallery

Siege of Bethulia — 2 Michel de Catinat
 Partner —

1 Bassano

1. George Titian

1. Raphael

1. Julio Romano

Loggia

— Pintoret

Ch. de Matto

— Pintoret

Chapel

— Corregio

Titian & C. Arcton

— Titian

Persens & Strobandeda

— Andrea Schiavoni

Empress M. VI. In page of the
 of the

3. Gaffey Kellers

A Page from a Catalogue of the Pictures at Windsor Castle, compiled from Memory by Frederick Prince of Wales, 1750

Kew, "and asked if I was married when I expressed my inclination rather to return to London."

A fortnight later the Prince, attended by Vertue and George Knapton, the Keeper of the King's Pictures, spent three hours at Kensington examining, and checking by the housekeeper's catalogue, every work of art in the Palace. The same thing was done at Hampton Court, to which place Vertue and Knapton were conveyed from Leicester House in a coach and four belonging to the Prince, who arrived soon after them. The Princess and her children, attended by a company of lords and ladies, were also at Hampton Court; and "with all this Royal and noble train we went through the apartments and lodgings, all above stairs and below, and every picture and painting through the Palace was curiously examined and criticized, his Royal Highness taking as much delight and pains as anybody." Vertue prepared three catalogues for the Prince, for which he was paid thirty guineas. The first was a copy of the catalogue of 1639, of the collection owned by Charles the First; and the second a copy of an inventory of the same collection made in 1649 by order of the Parliament, with the prices of all the pictures and the names of the purchasers. The third catalogue included all the pictures then at Kensington, Hampton Court and Windsor. The Prince also ordered a fourth volume in which his own collections were to be described.

In addition the Prince gave Vertue leave to engrave any pictures he chose from his collection, commissioned him to procure numerous prints and drawings, and finally bestowed upon him "the promise of the continuance of his friendship."

In view of these many favours it is not surprising that Vertue, to whom in his declining years fortune had been unkind, hoped that the tide had now turned and that the Prince's patronage would bring about an improvement in his position. The hope might well have been realized, for the Prince seems to have liked the old engraver and expert and to have appreciated his knowledge. But it was not to be, and all Vertue's happy anticipations were destroyed by the untimely death of his newly found protector. The last commission he received from him was to collect portraits of about forty philosophers, ancient and modern, in connection with a scheme for adorning the gardens at Kew. The Prince had designed a canal or waterway through the gardens, and intended with the excavated earth to rear a miniature

Parnassus which was to be ornamented with statues or busts of the philosophers whose portraits Vertue had collected.

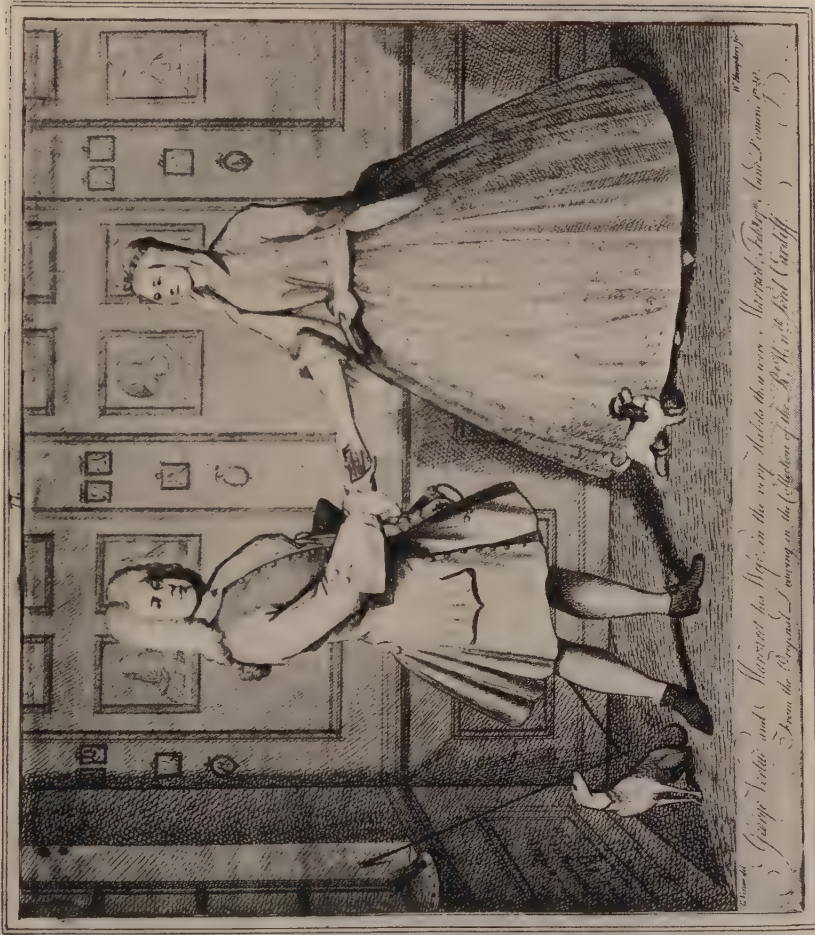
The Prince was full of this plan in the early months of 1751, and was constantly at Kew, superintending the excavations and the planting of shrubs and young trees brought from all parts of the world. It was a cold and unsettled spring; the Prince when far from the house one day was caught in a heavy rainstorm and soaked to the skin, and complications that followed a neglected chill soon cut short his career. Vertue, who lamented sincerely the loss of a man who in his opinion took more pleasure in works of art and the society of artists than any Prince who had lived for at least a century, concludes his account of him with a note of despair.

"But, alas!—O God thy will be done! Wednesday, March 20th, 1751, at ten o'clock in the morning died his Royal Highness, Frederick Prince of Wales, at Leicesterfields House—the loss of this Prince long may I lament. . . . Indifferent health, and weakness of sight increasing, and the loss of noble friends and the encouragement from them less and less daily this year—and worse in appearance begins with 1752."

Vertue survived the Prince for more than five years. Walpole, who speaks of him always with respect and admiration, says:—"He lost his friends, but his piety, mildness and ingenuity never forsook him. He laboured almost to the last, solicitous to leave a decent competence to a wife with whom he had lived many years in tender harmony."

Vertue had a paralytic stroke in March, 1756, and died in the following July, aged seventy-two. Dr. Ducarel, who knew him intimately, described his death as a public loss, particularly to the members of the Society of Antiquaries, to whom his house had always been open. He died, as he had lived, a Roman Catholic, but never spoke of his faith to Ducarel, perhaps because he knew the Doctor was so ardent a Protestant that he could not understand a man professing any other belief. That Vertue could be a Roman Catholic was to him "a matter of amazement." Ducarel says, in a letter written a month after his death:—

"He is buried in the south side of the cloisters of Westminster, near an old Monk of Westminster of the same name, who died in 1509. I was acquainted with George Vertue above twenty years, have travelled with him and been often in his company, and never once remember to have heard him say



George Vertue and His Wife on their Wedding Day, 1720

one word about religion. I had heard he was a papist, and since his death have been told he made converts of poor country girls who came to be servants in his family, which greatly surprised me.

"He had drawn up an account of the principal pictures in England, in divers noblemen's and gentlemen's houses, and also a history of the English painters and their works. By a hint which Professor Ward dropped to me five or six months ago I hope all these papers will now come into his (Dr. Ward's) hands."

By this it seems that Vertue must have discussed with Ward, perhaps after his first stroke, the future custody of the great mass of information he had gathered about artists, archæology, and collections in England. It did not, however, pass into Ward's hands; for, as we know, Walpole bought the whole of Vertue's note-books from his widow, and from them wrote the *Anecdotes of Painting in England*. Walpole says that Vertue collected information "assiduously" until his death, but in his note-books at the British Museum I have found no entries later than 1752—with one exception, a paragraph about the death of Gibbs the architect, copied from a newspaper of 1754. Where are the notes gathered in the last four years of Vertue's life? They might throw light upon the early days in London of Reynolds, whom Vertue does not mention, and tell us more of Gainsborough, of whom he speaks only once, in 1752, as "a young painter."

Mr. A. M. Hind when writing in 1914, in the annual volume of the Walpole Society, about the note-books at the Museum, put their number at about forty; and said that another of them, earlier in date than any we possess, was missing at the sale of the Strawberry Hill library in 1842. Walpole also speaks of "near forty volumes large and small," but that he owned many more than this is shown by the following extract from the catalogue of the Strawberry Hill sale:—

"No. 63. A collection of 52 vols., in folio, 4to and 8vo, of Manuscripts of that indefatigable Artist and Antiquary, Mr. George Vertue; these are the original manuscripts from which Lord Orford compiled his work *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, and were purchased by Lord Orford from the widow of Mr. Vertue in 1758."

CHAPTER NINE

Reynolds returns from Italy; The contradictory accounts of his connection with Hudson; Miss Weston's letters; Romantic story of her attachment to Reynolds; The "little girl at Westminster"; The Prince of Whales!; Reynolds' proposal to Mary Horneck; Works at the St. Martin's Lane Academy; His house in Great Newport Street; Its subsequent tenants; The Rutley Family; Reynolds meets Dr. Johnson; The Doctor in love; Origin of Hogarth's portrait of Fielding; De la Place's anecdote of Garrick as Fielding's ghost; Benjamin Wilson's prosperity; Declines a partnership with Hogarth; A letter of Hogarth on the beauties of Nature; Deplorable position of English artists in 1753; "Held in vassalage and dependence"; Their efforts to form a public Academy of Arts; Negotiations with the Dilettanti Society; Rouquet on the London auction rooms; "The only public picture galleries"; Foundation of the British Museum: "Worlidge's Exhibition."

IN October, 1752, the month in which Vertue wrote the last of his notes on contemporary artists that have come down to us, Joshua Reynolds returned from Italy, and his arrival in London heralded the commencement of a new and brilliant chapter in the history of painting in England. The traditions of the once-idolized Kneller and the feeble conventions of those who followed him were soon to be swept away by the young painter, who, as a newspaper critic wrote in 1775, "first had the courage and ingenuity to step out of that stiff formal track which our modern artists had got into, of drawing every lady with a rose between her forefinger and her thumb, and every gentleman with his hat under his arm." Vertue's notes, as I have said, contain no mention of Reynolds, of whose history little has been recorded before 1752, although his name appears in the list of artists published in *The Art of Painting* in 1748.

Northcote was of opinion that Reynolds was principally influenced in early life by the work of William Gandy, an artist who practised, chiefly in Devonshire, at the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. Gandy's portraits, of which there were many in the western counties, were perhaps the best seen by Reynolds before he came to London. He spoke of them to Northcote as equal to those by Rembrandt; and William Jackson of Exeter heard him say that when, after his return from Italy, he looked again at the works of Gandy, he found that they had lost nothing in his estimation. Of Gandy's origin and training, Northcote confesses his ignor-

ance, except that he was the son of another artist, James Gandy. However, I found a brief but valuable reference to him among the manuscript notes by Vertue, who says, following some remarks on Gaspar Smitz:—"Gandy of Exeter had some instruction from him while in London. This Gandy did paint Shadwell, poet." Walpole was ignorant even of the name of Gandy, but he noticed the entry in Vertue and added to his paragraph on Smitz:—"He had several scholars, particularly Maubert & one Gawdy (!) of Exeter."

In October, 1741, when Reynolds was seventeen, he came from Devonshire to London and was articled to Hudson the portrait painter for four years, but before half the agreed period had expired, he left his master owing to a misunderstanding, the cause of which is uncertain. Farington asserts that Hudson turned his pupil out of his house on a charge of disobedience; while Northcote says that the difference between master and pupil was caused by Hudson's jealousy of a portrait by Reynolds which attracted the admiration of all who saw it. Northcote's story was the one accepted by Cunningham, who with his usual carelessness added to it a statement that the applause bestowed upon the portrait was more than the "old man" could endure. Hudson at this time was just forty-two.

Of the stories told by Farington and Northcote there is no confirmation of any kind and both may be unfounded. It is certain that Reynolds' father bore no ill will to Hudson, for in writing to a friend in August, 1743, to tell him of the separation, he says, "I shall only say there was no controversy I was ever led into wherein I was so little offended with either party. In the meantime I bless God and Mr. Hudson and you for the extreme success that has attended Joshua hitherto."

Malone the friend and executor of Reynolds, says that he lived for three years in Devonshire after the separation from Hudson; and Farington, who also knew him, declares that he remained in his native county until he sailed for Italy in 1749. Northcote says nothing of a return to London, and from one of his father's letters we know that he was painting portraits at Plymouth in January, 1744, five months after his return from London. But other letters appear to contradict the statements of Malone and Farington about his long sojourn in Devonshire. It was in December, 1744, that the elder Reynolds wrote the letter mentioned in Chapter Five, in which he says he has heard

that Joshua "by his master's means" has been introduced to a famous club of artists. This suggests that by the end of 1744 Joshua had returned to London and was on good terms with Hudson, and stronger evidence of a similar nature is to be found in another communication from the same writer, dated May, 1745, in which he tells a correspondent that he understands "by a letter which Joshua has writ to Mr. Craunch, that Joshua's master is very kind to him, he comes to visit him pretty often and freely tells him where his pictures are faulty, which is a great advantage; and when he has finished anything of his own he is pleased to ask Joshua's judgment, which is a great honour."

These letters from the father of Reynolds (the discovery of which we owe to William Cotton) indicate that Joshua was working in London at the time when such of his biographers as had known him personally believed that he was rustivating in Devonshire. But there seems to be no direct evidence that Reynolds was in Devonshire for any considerable period after the quarrel with his master; and it is probable that he worked in London far longer than his biographers have thought, and perhaps in some association with Hudson. The writer of the *Testimonies to the Genius, etc., of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, published in 1792, says that he went to Italy "soon after he left Mr. Hudson, which was about the year 1749." The letters written to Miss Weston from Italy by Reynolds between 1749 and 1751 appear to be those of a man who had been living in the metropolis not long before he went abroad, for most of the references to them are to London and London acquaintances; and they are addressed to a lady who was then living in Great Queen Street, the street in which Hudson resided and where Reynolds served his apprenticeship to him. In these letters Reynolds mentions several times the "goods" left by him in London when he departed for Italy, and these perhaps were his canvases and the other equipment of his painting room, which he had warehoused until his return.

The correspondence with Miss Weston has been neglected by the biographers of Reynolds, who quote only a single letter written by him from Italy. This is addressed to Lord Edgcumbe, and is described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as "the only one written during his absence which remains." The three intimate and personal letters to Miss Weston are thus passed over, but their existence was well known to Northcote, who sneers at them indirectly while using information that is obviously

derived from them. Farington, whose memoir of Reynolds was published a few years after that of Northcote, refers contemptuously to the Weston letters as "literary scraps," but does not venture to question their authenticity, and even gives a passage from one of them, without acknowledging its source. Leslie and Taylor mention them once or twice but were evidently unacquainted with their history.

It was John Williams, better known as "Anthony Pasquin," who first brought these letters before the public, three or four years after the death of Reynolds, for the purpose of proving that the great painter could not spell. Foreseeing that their authenticity might be challenged Williams arranged that the originals should remain for a time with Mr. Richardson of York House, Strand; where, he said, anyone who chose to peruse them "will perceive that they have been faithfully and literally copied." Williams was on the worst of terms with the Royal Academy, and as he published these communications as *Original Letters from Sir Joshua Reynolds which prove him to have been illiterate*, it is easy to understand that Northcote and Farington, both Academicians, would have liked to ignore them.

The letters, when published, were prefaced by some alleged particulars about Miss Weston, to whom they were addressed. Miss Weston, it is said, was living at Fulham, many years after the period of her correspondence with Reynolds. She is described as "an elderly lady of elegant manner, but oppressed by penury. Her deportment and language were such as to induce many enquiries as to her real name and position in life, all of which she carefully concealed." However, when dying she confessed that in her youth she had fixed her affections on a gentleman who was the point of admiration in the world in which she then moved, and that she believed her passion was returned, but was deceived. She pointed to a trunk and said that it contained evidence as to the identity of her lover and herself, and in this trunk the letters from Reynolds were afterwards found. "They are," says Williams, "principally written from Italy, and will certainly operate to throw a new light on that celebrated character, and totally remove the long received idea that he was the author of the Discourses delivered at the Royal Academy, or a man of that learning which it has been generally supposed."

But the letters are those of a young man, and it will be seen that their faults are chiefly in spelling and punctuation. It was

not until eighteen or nineteen years after they were written that Reynolds composed the first of his Discourses, and in the interval he had been educated by constant association with some of the first literary men of his time. The suggestion that Reynolds was not the sole author of his Discourses, but was assisted in their composition at times by Johnson, Burke or Goldsmith, has been made more than once but has never been seriously credited. There is, however, reason to believe that one of them was revised, and perhaps polished, by Malone.

Reynolds was at Port Mahon, Minorca, then a British possession, when he commenced his correspondence with Miss Weston. His first letter to her is imperfect, on account, says Williams, "of a part of one of its sides being torn away," but the sense of the damaged portion is fairly intelligible:—

"December 10, (O.S.) 1749.

DEAR MISS WESTON,—

My memory is so bad that I vow I don't remember whether or no I writ you about my expedition before I left England; since I am sure I have not for I have writ to nobody. I saild from Plimouth so long ago as May 11 and have got no farther yet than Port Mahon, but before you shall receive this expect to be on tother side the water; I have been kept here near two months by an odd accident, I don't know whether to call it a lucky one or not, a fall from a horse down a precipice which cut my face in such a manner as confined me to my room so that I was forced to have recourse to painting. . . .

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There will be more money you know to spend at the Jubilee. Whenever the Commodore went ashore at Cadiz Lisbon, Gibraltar he allways took me with him and even when he waited upon the Day or King of Algiers I went with him and have had the honour of shaking him by the hand three several times, he Introduced me likewise to the Governour here General Blackney in so strong a manner that the Governour insisted at my not being at any expense while I was on the island but to eat at his house and ordered his secretary to provide me a lodging. You may imagine I spend my time here very agreeably there are about thirty English ladies Balls continually at the Generals and on Board the ships.

When I am settled at Rome I will write to you again to let you know how to direct to me in the meantime I shall be much obliged if you will call and see that my goods are safe and not spoiling, I would write to him who has them could I but think of his name I should be glad if you had a spare place in your garret that could they be at your house.

From your slave

J. REYNOLDS.

P.S. My compliments to Mr. Charlton and Mr. Wilks I hear the whole world is to be at the Jubilee I hope to see Mr. Charlton at least there—At Lisbon I saw a Bull fight and another at Cadiz which will be the subject of many conversations hereafter.

To Miss Weston

In Great Queen Street Lincolns Inn Fields London."

A comparison of this damaged letter with certain passages in Northcote (Second Edition, Vol. I, pp. 30, 31) shows that it was the source of all his information about Port Mahon. From it was derived the well-known story of the accident that permanently injured Reynolds's lip; and the account of his generous treatment by the Governor, General Blakeney, and of the painting of many portraits in Minorca. Yet Northcote, while making use of this material, speaks scornfully of the attempt to prove that

Reynolds was illiterate in his youth; and when quoting the letter he wrote to Lord Edgcumbe declares that it shows "the absurdity of imputing some *others* to his pen."

The "Commodore" mentioned in the letter to Miss Weston is Augustus Keppel, the brave sailor who defied the Dey of Algiers in his own Palace, and whose portrait by his friend Reynolds hangs in the National Gallery. Mr. "Wilks" may be the painter mentioned in the list of 1748; but more probably he is John Wilkes or his brother Heaton Wilkes, both of whom were known to Reynolds. Leslie and Taylor assume, in a note on the Weston letters ("if they be genuine") that Mr. "Wilks" is John Wilkes. Of Mr. Charlton I know nothing, but it is likely that he is the person of that name mentioned, in connection with the Wilkes brothers, in Reynolds's pocket book of 1755.

Both Charlton and Wilks appear again in the second letter, in which also are mentioned the two Pines (Robert Edge and his brother Simon) both painters; Richard Dalton, afterwards Librarian to George the Third; John Astley, who was the fellow apprentice with Reynolds of Thomas Hudson; and several other persons whom I cannot identify. A point of interest in this letter is the reference to "the little girl at Westminster by the Park," coming as it does from Reynolds whom we seem never to have known before as a young man, but always as middle aged or elderly, and always sedate and unimpassioned. In the second letter, which is undated, Reynolds says:—

"DEAR MISS WESTON,—

I wonder I have not received an Answer to all the letters I have sent you this is the third from Rome and one before from Mahon I suppose they have all miscarried so I take this opportunity of sending one by my Friend Mr. Dalton and a Worthy man he is, I hope he will deliver the Letter himself that you may be acquainted and when I return we will have many agreeable jaunts together.

I shall set out from Rome immediately after the next Lent or Carnival, Give my service to Mr. Charlton and Mr. Wilks and tell them that if it was possible to give them an idea of what is to be seen here, the remains of Antiquity the Sculpture, Paintings, Architecture etc. they would think it worth while nay they would break through all obstacles and set out immediately for Rome, then the Carnival of which I have heard

THE ENGLISH COLONY IN ROME

so much that I am resolved to stay since there has been none this Jubile or Holy year so the next they will make up for the old and the new. If they would set out so as to be here a month or two before the Carnival after which Astley and I will accompany them (as we intend to otherwise) to Venice and from thence to Paris seeing everything between those two places that are worth seeing going now and then a little out of the direct Road and from thence to England or perhaps we shall go to Antwerp first. I am not in jest now but in good earnest and wish they would really think of it. Mr. Dalton will acquaint them with the time such a journey will take, and the Expense, and the most expeditious way of travelling I don't think they need be out of England above a year I wish them a good journey if they will write me when they set out I will come as far as Florence to meet them.

send all the news you can, not forgetting to say something about my goods.

I am dear Miss Weston

Yours

J. REYNOLDS.

P.S. Don't forget to remember me to Mrs. Sutherland, Mr. Hart, and Mr. Price if you ever see them and the Mr. Pines if you ever see them not forgetting the little girl at Westminster by the Park. write me immediately, immediately by the first post Mr. Dalton will tell you how to direct."

The last of these epistles, written at Rome on April 30th, 1751, shows with what interest the English colony in that city received news from London at a time when the mails were slow and uncertain in their passage.

"Your letter," says Reynolds, "I received with a great deal of pleasure and as tis increasing a pleasure to communicate it I read it to a great many English that were at the Coffe house but without mentioning the writer (tho if I had it would have been much to your honour) for you must know that when a Letter comes from England we are all impatient to hear news and indeed your letter was full of it, and however it happend every person took the same pleasure in it as myself, Mr. Lovelace, Mrs. Pine were well known to most of the painters, others knew Miss Hambleton and others Mr. More, others Miss Gunnings indeed their fame had reached here some time ago."

The "Miss Gunnings" whose fame had already reached Rome were the two sisters, famous for their beauty, who afterwards married the Duke of Hamilton and the Earl of Coventry. Reynolds painted them both after his return to England, and a portrait of the Duchess of Hamilton was one of the earliest works exhibited by him.

Reynolds in another passage of the letter of 1751 expresses his sorrow at the information conveyed to him by Miss Weston that the "Westminster girl" had wandered from the paths of propriety and compromised herself hopelessly with a certain Lord John whose surname is not mentioned. After referring to his approaching return to London he speaks of the recent death of Frederick, Prince of Wales in terms which show that he agreed with Vertue that by this event the arts in England had lost a powerful and intelligent patron.

"I am sorry," he writes, "you have been to the expense of paying for my Goods I shall take care to repay you with thanks when I return which will be infallibly this year we set out in about two months time and take the tour of Venice and through Germany and let France alone till next year it lies so near England that I can take a trip there in a summer and back again, my fellow traveller is Mr. Ashley (Astley) who lived with Mr. Hudson.

"We are all extremely afflicted for the loss of the Prince of Whales who certainly would have been a great patron to Painters as he already was to Mr. Dalton I feel an additional sorrow on his account I beg my compliments to him particularly and to all friends I cannot form myself any idea of a person more miserable than the Princess of Whales must be, deprived at once of a husband she loved and with him all thoughts of ambition, Adieu I will not desire you to write any Answer to this letter because I shall remove from Rome to Florence and other Parts of Italy so that you won't know where to direct, but I shall not for that reason neglect writing to you."

The tone of these letters discredits the romantic story with which Williams introduced them to the public. There is nothing in them to show that Reynolds was on terms of more than ordinary friendship with Miss Weston; and his interest in that lady seems to have centred chiefly in her ability and willingness to look after his property in London. His biographers say nothing

PROPOSALS FOR MARRIAGE

of any connection between him and Miss Weston after his return from Italy, but she may have been the lady of the same name who figures in his list of sitters in 1757. Reynolds, who died a bachelor, was not, as far as we know, much influenced by women; although there is a legend—supported to some extent by contemporary gossip—that he proposed to Angelica Kauffman, the story of whose disastrous marriage to an adventurer has been told in *Miss Angel* by Lady Ritchie. Another story, less commonly known, connects with the name of Reynolds that of the beautiful Mary Horneck, the “Jessamy Bride” of Goldsmith. Sir Henry Bunbury, who was a godson of Sir Joshua and the nephew of Mary Horneck, says that there was a family tradition that Reynolds when painting her portrait became so much enamoured of her that at one of the sittings he fell upon his knees and solicited her hand. Mary Horneck, afterwards the wife of General Gwyn, retained her beauty to a very late period of her life. Hazlitt, who saw her more than fifty years after the painting of the Reynolds portrait, compared her to Ninon de l’Enclos.

Reynolds, when he returned from Italy in the autumn of 1752, lived at first in St. Martin’s Lane, close to the Academy of Painting, but he did not join it at once. Joseph Moser, who possessed some of its records, states in one of his notes on art history in the *European Magazine*, that Reynolds’ connection with the Academy did not begin until two or three years after his settlement in London. In referring to 1755 Moser says:—

“This is the first time that the name of Mr. Reynolds appears in the account book of the Academy in Peter Court, St. Martin’s Lane. To this establishment as long as it existed, that is until it merged into the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua was an active, zealous, and with respect to his instruction of the students, a most liberal member. October 19th, 1765, we have now before us his signature twice to the passing of the accounts, and it is curious enough that, though his name is written at the same time upon the opposite page, it is at first written short ‘J. Reynolds,’ and on the second long ‘Joshua Reynolds,’ a circumstance that with respect to Shakespeare has caused much observation.”

From this it would seem that Reynolds did not study at the St. Martin’s Lane Academy when he was living in London as the pupil of Hudson. There is, however, evidence to show that

he must have worked in the life class at some time after 1755. In the catalogue of a collection formed by the younger Paine, whose portrait by him is now at Oxford, No. 85 is thus described:—"Sir Joshua Reynolds. A Candlelight study made at the Academy in St. Martin's Lane." Moser says that Sir Joshua's pupils Marchi, Parry, Berridge and Beach all worked at the Academy between 1760 and 1767.

From St. Martin's Lane Reynolds soon removed to the adjoining Great Newport Street, where, at what is now No. 5, he remained for seven or eight years and painted a great number of portraits. Of his life here not much is known, but a letter from Lord Cathcart shows that the brilliant young painter's work was not always satisfactory to his sitters. Writing in October, 1753, Lord Cathcart says:—"Again with Mr. Reynolds, and was disagreeably surprised with the figure. After some reasoning he came to the opinion that it would not do. I breakfasted with him and stood to him a good while. I thought it was much improved, and he was extremely satisfied with the alteration so we parted in great good humour."

Reynolds lived in the Great Newport Street house until his removal to Leicester Fields in 1761; and among the eighteenth-century tenants who succeeded him were the Porter family—Jane, the author of *The Scottish Chiefs* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Anna Maria, who wrote *The Hungarian Brothers*, and their brother Robert. The last, afterwards Sir Robert Ker Porter, then a young artist, used Reynolds's former painting room both as a studio and as the meeting-place for a sketching club of which Thomas Girtin and John Sell Cotman were members. After the Porters left Great Newport Street the house was taken by a picture dealer and restorer named Rutley and by him and his descendants its connection with the arts was maintained for more than a century, until the retirement of Mr. J. L. Rutley in 1914. The house probably dates from the seventeenth century, and was of a respectable age when it was taken by Reynolds in 1753. At that time its surroundings were more pleasant than they are to-day, when the growth of London has made dingy and confined a locality that was then but a short distance from the open country. The late Mr. J. L. Rutley, who showed me the house not long before he left it, told me that his father could remember when it had a good garden with a row of elms at the end, and when a neighbour's garden boasted a fine and productive mulberry tree.

When Reynolds lived in Great Newport Street the house had a garden in front as well as at the back and this in wet weather was inconvenient to his sitters, whose carriages could not draw up to the door. The neighbourhood at this time must have been almost suburban for J. T. Smith tells us that within a hundred yards, in St. Martin's Lane, the mother of Powel the colourman made a pipe of wine each year from the grapes that grew in the garden behind the shop.

Mr. Rutley's grandfather, who was well acquainted with Sir Thomas Lawrence and varnished his pictures for him, owned some relics of Reynolds in the shape of canvases on which the great painter had arranged specimens of various pigments for experimental purposes. These canvases were presented by the elder Rutley to Lawrence who was much interested in them and kept them until his death, after which they were lost sight of for a time. But they reappeared at Christie's many years later and are now preserved at the Royal Academy among other memorials of the first President. Reynolds' house, which maintained its ancient appearance until the end of Mr. Rutley's tenancy, has since been rejuvenated as far as its front is concerned, and has had other pictorial associations of a kind. It was for a time the headquarters of a group of cinema companies.

It was at Great Newport Street that Reynolds made the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson. When these two remarkable men met for the first time in 1753, Reynolds, a young man of thirty, was beginning his career; but Johnson, his senior by fourteen years, was already a person of consequence. He had recently completed the publication in serial form of that notable collection of essays known as *The Rambler* and was now engaged in the preparation of his great dictionary. Reynolds was a bachelor, and Johnson too was socially at a loose end, for he had lost his wife and was still supposed to be lamenting her, although Samuel Richardson suggests in a letter of this year that the widower was seeking consolation in another direction. Writing to Elizabeth Carter on October 2nd, 1753, he says:—"Miss Mulso is at present at North End. I hope as that air agrees with her, for it is very soft and balmy, she will stay there a good while. That is a most excellent girl, is she not? Mr. Johnson *rambled* thither, principally on her account, last Sunday. He is in love with her."

Johnson, however, did not marry the lady (afterwards Mrs. Chapone) whose attractions had drawn him all the way from

Fleet Street to Richardson's country house at Fulham, and the fact that he and Reynolds remained free from matrimonial ties was probably in part responsible for the closeness and intimacy of the long friendship that first brought the painter into touch with the literary world of the London of his time.

Some of the greatest lights of that world, Johnson, Burke, Gibbon, Sterne, Goldsmith and Sheridan, live for us as far as their externals are concerned in the portraits of Reynolds, who loved to paint such men as these. With Fielding, who died in 1754 while Reynolds was living at Great Newport Street, he does not seem to have come into contact or he might have given to the world that presentment of the novelist which, unfortunately, is lacking. No portrait of the famous author of *Tom Jones* and *Amelia* is known to exist, and the only pictorial record of him is an outline drawing in profile made some time after his death, by Hogarth. Several stories have been told of the making of this sketch. One account says that Hogarth drew it solely from memory; another that he copied it from a silhouette in black paper cut by a lady of Fielding's acquaintance.

A less known but more romantic explanation of the origin of Hogarth's portrait was given in 1785 in a volume of essays and anecdotes written by Pierre Antoine De la Place, the French author who made the translation of *Tom Jones* that was published in Paris early in 1750. De la Place, who believed implicitly the story told in his book, gave it on the authority of Garrick, with whom he was well acquainted. When Garrick visited Paris some years after the death of Hogarth, De la Place presented him with a copy of a new edition of the French version of *Tom Jones*, of which the frontispiece was a reproduction of Hogarth's portrait of Fielding. Garrick on opening the book noticed the portrait and immediately gave way to laughter, which he excused by telling the following story.

Garrick said that after Fielding's death Hogarth was always regretting that the novelist had never sat to him. One day when alone in his painting room, at work upon the draperies of a portrait, he was astonished to hear the voice of Fielding calling to him from an adjoining apartment. "Hogarth," said the voice, "take thy pencil and draw my picture. Thy regret at not having it has reached me. Hasten then, for my stay with thee will be but a quarter of an hour." Fielding then appeared, and Hogarth, notwithstanding some trepidation, had sufficient presence of

mind to draw an outline to the satisfaction of the ghost, who then disappeared, after warning the artist not to look behind him.

This portrait was shown to several who had been the friends of Fielding and they all admitted its exact resemblance, but for a long time Hogarth said nothing to anyone of its origin or of the visitation, the remembrance of which was never absent from his mind. At last, unable to bear the secret any longer, he confided it to Garrick, who then confessed that the supposed ghost was none other than himself, made up as Fielding. He had managed the whole affair with no assistance except that of an old servant of Hogarth's whom he had bribed to admit him to the house. Garrick proved the truth of his assertion by performing the trick again, but promised Hogarth that he would not reveal the secret during the artist's lifetime.

The strange story told by De la Place in the book of 1785 soon became a subject of conversation in London. It was noticed by several newspapers and among others by the *Morning Herald*, the comments in which show that Garrick, a confirmed joker, had deceived De la Place as he had deceived many others before. The *Morning Herald* was then owned and edited by Henry Bate Dudley, who was deeply interested in theatrical matters and had been intimately acquainted with Garrick for some years before the actor's death in 1779. It is probable that Bate Dudley wrote, or provided the information for, the following note, which may give the real version of the origin of Hogarth's portrait of Fielding:—

"The anecdote of Hogarth has its foundation in fact, though unaccompanied by any of the miraculous circumstances with which it is related by M. De la Place. The fact really was that Garrick and Hogarth, sitting together in a tavern, mutually lamented the want of a portrait of Fielding. 'I think,' said Garrick, 'I could make his face,' which he did accordingly. 'For Heaven's sake hold, David,' said Hogarth, 'and remain as you are for a few minutes.' Garrick did so while Hogarth sketched the outlines which were afterwards finished from their mutual recollection, and this drawing was the original of all the portraits we have at present of the admired author of *Tom Jones*."

This anecdote was supplemented in the *Morning Herald* by another concerning the actor and the artist, which shows that Garrick tried upon Hogarth the same foolish trick with which he

deceived Gainsborough, as well as some unnamed portrait painter mentioned by Northcote:—

“Garrick and Hogarth did not always agree so well. The latter entreated his friend David to sit for his picture, with which Garrick complied, but while the painter was proceeding with his task he mischievously altered his features with gradual changes so as to render the portrait perfectly unlike. Hogarth blamed the unlucky effort of his art and began a second time, but with the same success. After remaining a little he began a third time and did not discover the trick until after three or four repetitions. He then got into a violent passion and would have thrown his brushes and palette at Garrick’s head if the wag had not made his escape.”

When Reynolds lived in Great Newport Street one of the most successful of London portrait painters was Benjamin Wilson, the artist who deceived Hudson with an imitation Rembrandt. Wilson, “with patient industry, pliant manners and practical discretion,” to use the words of a writer of his time, had made so good a position for himself that although his interests were not wholly confined to the arts he was earning in 1756 no less than fifteen hundred a year by portraiture alone. He also dabbled in science, and for some years held the purely commercial position of Painter to the Board of Ordnance which, according to his son, Sir Robert Wilson, was worth £4,000 a year in time of peace and £7,000 a year in time of war.

There is contemporary evidence that as an artist Wilson at this time stood high in public estimation. The *London Magazine* published some verses in which his work in painting and etching is described in flattering terms and compared with that of one of the greatest masters. The writer says in conclusion:—

“Then Rembrandt’s wreath to you we must allow,
Since what once Rembrandt was is Wilson now.”

Another testimony to his standing is to be found in a letter written by Mr. John West in 1759 to Viscount Nuneham. Mr. West, who had been to Reynolds’ studio to see a portrait then in progress, tells his friend that it is charming, “almost as well as Wilson could have done.” Hogarth appears to have had a favourable opinion of Wilson’s work, for about 1756 he tried to induce him to enter into some kind of partnership in portrait painting, to which Wilson would not consent.

Hogarth, who thought that in this branch he was not receiving a just proportion of the public favour, then set to work alone, and declared that he would publish no more prints for the present but should devote himself almost entirely to portraiture. In an advertisement which appeared in the spring of 1757 he says:—

“Mr. Hogarth is obliged to inform the subscribers to his Election prints that the three last cannot be published until about Christmas next, which delay is entirely owing to the difficulties he has met with to procure able hands to engrave the plates; but that he may neither have any more apologies to make on such an account, nor trespass any farther on the indulgence of the Public by increasing a collection already grown sufficiently large, he intends to employ the rest of his time in portrait painting chiefly. This notice seems the more necessary as several spurious and scandalous prints have lately been published in his name.

“N.B. All Mr. Hogarth’s engraved works are to be had at his house in Leicester Fields, separate or bound together; as also his *Analysis of Beauty*, in Quarto, with two large explanatory plates. Price 15s., with which will be delivered gratis an eighteen penny pamphlet, published by A. Millar, called *The Investigator*, written in opposition to the Principles laid down in the above *Analysis of Beauty*, by A. R., a friend of Mr. Hogarth and eminent portrait painter now at Rome.”

The eminent portrait painter is, of course, Allan Ramsay, with whom at this time Hogarth appears to have been on the best of terms, although he says that *The Investigator* challenges the theories set forth in *The Analysis of Beauty*. Ramsay published several essays under the general title of *The Investigator*, and some of them are in the British Museum, but I have not been able to trace the one that contains the criticism of Hogarth’s book.

It is clear that Hogarth’s new departure was successful, at all events at first. In April, 1757, his friend Chancellor Hoadly writes:—

“Hogarth has again got into portraits, and has his hands full and at a high price. He has almost finished a most noble one of our sprightly friend David Garrick and his wife; they are a fine contrast. David is sitting at a table smilingly thoughtful over an epilogue or some such composition (of his own you may be sure) his head supported by his writing hand, and

Madam archly enough stealing away his pen unseen behind. It has not so much fancy as to be affected or ridiculous, and yet enough to raise it from the formality of a mere portrait. There is an admirable head of Dr. Hay of the Commons, which if I were like I would not have my picture drawn. I should not like to meet that figure alive in the fields going to Chelsea for fear of laying that night in a ditch with twenty gashes in my crown."

The portrait of Garrick and his wife, which the actor is said to have considered unsatisfactory, is now in the Royal collection at Windsor.

That Hogarth's temporary prosperity of 1757 had a mollifying effect on his temper is shown by a letter of that year written to John Ellis the naturalist, who had sent him an engraving of some botanical specimens. It is hard to believe that the modest worshipper of nature revealed in this letter can be the same Hogarth who six years earlier cursed the public and tore down his Golden Head in a fit of disappointed vanity. He says, writing from Chiswick on the 28th of November, 1757:—

"DEAR SIR,—

Being out of town I did not come by your agreeable present till yesterday, for which I return you my sincere thanks. It must be allowed your print is accurately executed, and very satisfactory too. As for your pretty little seed cups, or vases, they are a sweet confirmation of the pleasure Nature seems to take in superadding an elegance of form to most of her works, wherever you find them. How poor and bungling are all the imitations of art! When I have the pleasure of seeing you next we will sit down—nay kneel down if you will—and admire these things. I shall be in town in two or three days for good, and will take the first opportunity of waiting on you. In the meantime I am, Sir, your most obliged, humble servant,
WM. HOGARTH."

Meanwhile, in spite of the prosperity of the leading portrait painters, the position of the rank and file of English artists was deplorable. One of them, writing many years afterwards and looking back at this dark period, says that he and his fellows were then "generally speaking the property of picture dealers (at that time their chief employers) and held by them in somewhat the same kind of vassalage and dependence that many

authors are by booksellers in this day." The artists were a dis-united body and almost the only place where they came in touch with one another was at the Academy in St. Martin's Lane, where the harsh treatment accorded to the profession was the constant topic of conversation. It was generally agreed among them that the foundation of a public Academy offered the best prospect of improving their position, but the difficulties in the way of organizing such an institution seemed insurmountable.

Nevertheless the idea of a public Academy was never lost sight of, and schemes for its foundation were discussed frequently, and not only by the artists. In 1748 the Dilettanti Society, composed chiefly of wealthy amateurs, had given a favourable reception to a plan for an Academy proposed by one of its members, Robert Dingley, and had promised to give it some support.

It was probably the Dilettanti Society that Vertue referred to as "the Grand Clubb for promoting the Arts of Drawing, Painting, etc.," which held a meeting in November, 1749, at the Bedford Head, Southampton Street, Covent Garden. There were present, he said:—"many persons of quality, nobles and gentlemen, to settle the preliminaries for the establishment of an Academy in London. Which projects either to raise subscriptions or to lay the foundations necessary."

Dingley offered to subscribe fifty pounds, but nothing came of his scheme and the next step was taken by the St. Martin's Lane Academy. This institution, though it had no charter and no official recognition, appears by this time to have developed into something more than a mere life class which could be attended by anyone who cared to pay the fees. Its records have disappeared, although some of them were in existence as late as 1813, but we know that it had a President, as Hogarth refers to him (without mentioning his name) when speaking of a dispute he had with Ramsay at the Academy. It was managed by a committee of sixteen artists chosen by election; and a sub-committee met every autumn, at a place duly advertised, to examine the credentials of such students as desired to join the classes for the winter. Hogarth, Gravelot, Hayman, Roubiliac and Yeo, all served at times on these small committees of examination, which met at a tavern, the Half Moon, in the Strand.

A circular letter was sent from St. Martin's Lane in 1753 to all artists of repute resident in London, inviting them to meet at the Turk's Head Tavern, Greek Street, Soho, on the 13th of

November, for the purpose of electing twenty-four artists of various classes who would advise as to the erection of a proper building, the making of regulations, the instruction of students, and other matters connected with the establishment of a public Academy for the improvement of the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture.

This meeting, which was without result so far as the establishment of an Academy was concerned, was the first held by the artists at the tavern which was their meeting-place for many years afterwards. It was not, however, in Greek Street that they principally congregated, for the proprietor of the Turk's Head soon after 1753 removed his establishment to more spacious premises in Gerrard Street, near by, and it was in Gerrard Street that the earlier dinners of the artists took place. The most important of them was in 1759, held on June 4th, to celebrate the coming of age of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Third. On this occasion the front of the tavern was adorned by transparencies painted by Wale, and the invited guests included Garrick, who made a speech.

In 1755 negotiations were commenced between the Dilettanti Society and a group of twenty-five representative artists that included Francis Hayman (Chairman), Joshua Reynolds, Francis Milner Newton, Louis François Roubiliac, Thomas Hudson, William Hoare, Gavin Hamilton, Samuel Scott, Robert Strange, and George Michael Moser. On behalf of this group Hayman and Newton submitted to the Dilettanti Society a fully detailed plan for the foundation of a Royal Academy of London; and the Society, which had expressed its desire to assist the artists, accepted the plan as a groundwork to proceed upon "though liable to alterations." There was some correspondence and discussion between the two bodies, but they came to no agreement, and the further consideration of the scheme was dropped, apparently by mutual consent.

The reasons for this are not stated, but John Pye, in his *Patronage of British Art*, says that "the Dilettanti Society, finding that they could neither participate in the Government of the Academy, nor in the appropriation of their own fund, broke off the negotiations." Pye, however, bases his statement upon the evidence of Robert Strange the engraver, who is not exactly an unprejudiced authority. Strange, who wrote his account of the proceedings after he had quarrelled with most of the other artists

FAILURE TO FOUND AN ACADEMY

concerned, could see in the actions of the Dilettanti Society nothing but "that generosity and benevolence which are peculiar to true greatness," and on the part of the artists' representatives "motives apparently limited to their own views and ambition to govern." The records of the Dilettanti Society, which Pye does not seem to have consulted, put a different complexion on the affair.

As the Academy was to be an Academy of artists it was natural that its members should wish to have the larger share of its control, and to choose a President from their own ranks. But the Dilettanti wished to impose a lay President upon the artists, just as George the Fourth, after the death of Lawrence, wished to put into his place "some distinguished amateur," and would have done so had he not been dissuaded by Sir Robert Peel. The artists of 1755 in their anxiety to obtain the support of the Dilettanti would have given way in the matter of the Presidentship, at all events in the first year, but they could not have accepted all the recommendations of the Society without an entire surrender of authority. The following are the recommendations made at the General Meeting of the Dilettanti Society, held in May, 1755:—

(1) That the President of the intended Royal Academy be always and annually chosen from the Society of Dilettanti.

(2) That all the members of the Society of Dilettanti be members of the Academy, but that only twelve of the senior members present at the meetings shall have votes.

(3) That any artist may be chosen a member of the Academy, but that only twelve of the artists, to be chosen annually out of the body, shall have votes, and that upon an equality of votes the President shall have a second vote.

By these rules the Dilettanti Society could always have commanded a majority of votes, and it is not surprising that the artists declined to accept them, in spite of their extreme desire for the proposed Academy, which was to have provided not only schools but "a yearly exhibition of pictures, statues or models, and designs in architecture." This would have meant much to the men of 1755, who were encompassed with difficulties unknown to their brethren of the present day. They had but one tolerable art school for advanced students, no exhibitions at which their work could be shown, and, except at auction rooms, only the rarest opportunities of seeing good pictures by the Old Masters.

Walpole suggests that Hogarth's failure to appreciate the great Italians was due to the fact that he had seen few fine works by them and was more familiar with the vile imitations palmed off by the fraudulent dealers of the time.

Rouquet, the Swiss miniature painter, gives in *L'État des Arts en Angleterre* a description of the auction rooms that furnished London with its only public picture galleries in the middle of the century. He notes in 1755 their increasing popularity and the number of rooms that had been built within his memory for the sale of pictures. The exhibitions of these pictures, he says, amused the Londoners in the same way that the exhibitions of the Salon amused the Parisians. The auction rooms were thrown open two or three days before each sale, and admission was freely granted except to the mob, which was kept out by a police officer stationed at the door for the purpose. "Sales of this kind have made the taste for pictures general in London; they have awakened interest and the public has acquired from them some knowledge of the different schools and masters. Besides, a sale is a kind of gamble in which clever players who understand the game put into practice all kinds of means for making dupes."

The Swiss painter adds that English artists have to fight always against the interests of the dealers, who, unable to obtain sufficient profit by the sale of modern work, make a point of depreciating it in the eyes of collectors and of cultivating in their minds the absurd notion that the value of a picture depends upon its age. In this respect he thinks that the position of the artist is better in France than in England and in writing to Hogarth from Paris in 1753 he says:—

"The humbug *vertu* is much more out of fashion here than in England; freethinking upon that and other topics is more common here than amongst you. Old pictures and old stories fare alike; a dark picture becomes a damned picture, as the soul of the dealer; and consequently modern performances are much encouraged, mine amongst them."

In 1753 Paris seems to have been a better field than London for painters and sculptors. But even in London there were signs of awakening and improvement, for in the same year the first steps were taken towards the foundation of a museum in which the fine arts were to be represented. Sir Hans Sloane died early in 1753, and, subject to the payment of twenty thousand pounds to

his heirs, bequeathed to the nation a collection that enjoyed a European reputation and had been formed by him with great expense and trouble. Parliament voted the money and the collection was acquired by the Government, but apparently not without some hesitation. This at least is the impression given by some of the letters written in 1753 by the Rev. John Jeffreys, the Paris correspondent of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. Jeffreys mentions the collection once or twice in his letters of March and says something about the King's disinclination to purchase the treasures gathered by Sir Hans. In April he hints to the Lord Chancellor that the French may buy them if they are declined by the English:—

"I hope the Speaker's scheme for purchasing Sir Hans Sloane's collection will not meet with opposition. I have had some conversation with Abbé Sallier about the collection and I gave him the catalogue you were so good as to send me. If it is offered to the French King the Abbé will use all his interest with Monsieur D'Argenson that it may be bought, but I most sincerely hope we shall prevent it going out of our country."

The establishment of the British Museum, of which the Sloane collection was the nucleus, although excellent in itself did nothing towards removing what was then one of the principal difficulties of the artist. If he painted a picture, however good, the chances were remote that he could show it in a place where it might attract a purchaser. An eighteenth-century biographer of Thomas Worlidge tells us how the difficulty was surmounted by him. The biographer mentions among the earlier works of Worlidge the portraits of a Ludgate Hill tavern keeper, Mr. Ashley, of his wife and son, and of his bar-keeper, Mrs. Gaywood. "These," he says, "were wrought by the pencil of gratitude, for Worlidge was greatly indebted to Mr. Ashley for the services he rendered him. The dining-room of that gentleman might without impropriety have been called Worlidge's exhibition, for he was allowed, whenever he had completed a design, to hang it up there for public inspection, which frequently answered the end. I remember particularly among them a *Christ taken down from the Cross*." No doubt the pictures were seen by many, for Mr. Ashley enjoyed a reputation as the popularizer of punch, which he was the first to retail in small quantities. His tavern was a favourite place of resort, acclaimed in verse:—

“Where China bowls the waiting Naiads fill
 Oh! let me Ashley’s taste, on Ludgate Hill,
 Where od’rous orange peels, in rows thick strung,
 Trophies of num’rous past exploits, are hung.”

Thomas Worlidge was a painter who also practised etching “in the style of Rembrandt,” and it was the opinion of some of his admirers that he excelled that master. His wife, also an artist, and a woman of great beauty, was a famous needlewoman, whose landscapes in silk and wool were thus described by a contributor to the *Public Advertiser*:—

“At Worlidge’s as late I saw
 A female artist paint and draw.
 Now take a crayon, now a pencil,
 Now thread a needle—strange utensill
 I hardly could believe my eyes
 To see hills, houses, steeples, rise;
 While crewel o’er the canvas drawn
 Became a river or a lawn.”

Worlidge, who died in 1766, lived long enough to see the establishment in London of public exhibitions of pictures, in some of the earliest of which his own work and that of his clever wife were represented.

CHAPTER TEN

Pictures at the Foundling Hospital; Captain Coram's opinion of the Hospital's Governors; Hayman's plan for an exhibition; "A great Museum all our own"; The plan accepted by the artists and their President, John Wilkes; First Exhibition at the room of the Society of Arts; Critics in 1760; Supremacy of Reynolds admitted; Gainsborough unrepresented in the first exhibition; Adrien Carpentiers; Paul Sandby the fashion; Curious pledge by the artists; Clothes all one colour; The artists quarrel with the Society of Arts; They establish a new exhibition at Spring Gardens; Contemporary descriptions; Hogarth's "Sigismonda"; A madman's criticism; The picture contemptuously received; Riots at the exhibition of the Society of Arts; Exhibition at Spring Gardens in 1762; A question of authorship; Reynolds, not Johnson?; Uncatalogued portrait by Reynolds; The first criticism of Zoffany; The Sign Painters' exhibition; Amusing announcements; Gainsborough and the London painters; Cotes' portrait of O'Brien the actor; The artists' dinner on St. Luke's Day; The bill of fare; Roubiliac's model, John Malin.

IT was Hogarth who unintentionally sowed the seed which originated our modern system of exhibitions of pictures. Soon after the establishment of the Foundling Hospital, and before the present edifice was erected in Bloomsbury, Hogarth presented to the Governors his portrait of Captain Coram, to whom the foundation of the charity was principally due. Hogarth's example inspired other artists, and, to quote a writer of 1751:—"soon after the Hospital became habitable several eminent masters of painting, sculpture and other arts, were pleased to contribute many elegant ornaments for its adornment."

Among these ornaments were several portraits; pictures of religious subjects by Hayman, Hogarth, Highmore and Wills; and a number of landscapes in circular frames (representing hospitals in London) by Richard Wilson, Haytley, Wale and Gainsborough. Vertue has some notes about these landscapes that are worth quoting. In 1745, when mentioning Harding, the imitator of Canaletto, he remarks, "He has lately painted some pieces of landscape in rounds, which he has presented to the Foundling Hospital to adorn their room." Again, in 1750, he says:—

"In the Foundling Hospital, in the Governor's Room, where the pictures are, in small rounds prospects of the several hospitals—very well done—amongst them those done by Gainsborough are thought the best and masterly manner, there are twelve in all done by different painters."

Twelve landscapes are mentioned here, but there are only eight now at the Foundling, none of which is by Harding; and although Vertue speaks of "those" pictures by Gainsborough only one is in the collection, *A View of Sutton's Hospital, called the Charterhouse*. It is curious that the writer of a long account of the Foundling pictures published in the *Art Union* in 1840 speaks of and praises highly three circular landscapes—"ovals" he calls them—by Gainsborough, but he may have confused their authorship, as he assigns the Charterhouse picture to Wale.

These statements suggest that some of the circular landscapes presented to the Foundling are missing, but it is probable that both Vertue and the writer in the *Art Union* were mistaken, as in a list of 1751 only eight pictures are described and their titles and authorship are given as they appear now. The compiler of the list of 1751 says, after describing the historical paintings:—

"On each side of these pictures are placed smaller pictures in circular frames, representing the most considerable hospitals in and near London—

- (1) The view of the hospital for exposed children.
- (2) The view of the hospital at Hyde Park Corner, called St. George's Hospital. These two by Mr. Wilson.
- (3) The view of Chelsea Hospital.
- (4) The view of Bethlem Hospital.

These two by Mr. Haytley.

- (5) The view of St. Thomas's Hospital.
- (6) The view of Greenwich Hospital.
- (7) The view of the Bluecoat Hospital.

These three by Mr. Wale.

- (8) The view of Sutton's Hospital, called the Charterhouse. By Mr. Gainsborough."

The generosity of the London artists led to the appointment of about twenty of them as Governors of the Hospital, a compliment they appreciated, although Captain Coram had a very poor opinion of the Governors of the time. Vertue says he met the Captain at Dr. Mead's table on New Year's Day, 1750, when the affairs of the Hospital were discussed. After dinner the host "toasted health to all the Governors—honest Governors—of the Foundling Hospital. 'Hoping,' says Coram, 'the new chosen ones will be better than the last, who were rogues enough.' 'But these Governors,' said the Doctor, 'you don't suppose . . . ?' 'I expect little better than the former.'"



By permission of the Governors of The Foundling Hospital

The Court Room at the Foundling Hospital

HAYMAN'S PLAN FOR AN EXHIBITION

However, it is unlikely that the artist-Governors had much to do with the administration of the institution, and although they dined together at the Hospital each year, on the 5th of November, it was always at their own expense. The works they had presented were on view all the year round and drew crowds of fashionable people to the Foundling, where the pictures became so popular and were the theme of so much conversation that a proposal was made to organize a public exhibition without waiting for the foundation of the long-talked-of national Academy. The proposed exhibition was the idea of Francis Hayman, as we learn from contemporary evidence that has been overlooked until now.

At the artists' dinner held on the 5th of November, 1759, a feature of the entertainment was the singing of an ode in which the guests were invited "nobly to think on Hayman's thought" of founding "A great Museum all our own." The *Royal Magazine* explains that the allusion is "to a scheme of Mr. Hayman's (whose excellent abilities scarce reflect a greater honour on his country than the openness and generosity of his mind) for a public receptacle to contain the works of artists for the general advantage and glory of the Nation and satisfaction of foreigners."

Immediate steps were taken to put Hayman's plan into execution, and on the night of the dinner at the Foundling the following advertisement was drawn up, inviting the artists to a general meeting:—

"Foundling Hospital, Nov. 5, 1759. At a meeting of the Artists, resolved: That a general meeting of all Artists in the several branches of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Engraving, Chasing, Seal-cutting, and Medalling, be held at the Turk's Head Tavern, in Gerrard Street, Soho, on Monday the 12th inst., at Six in the evening to consider of a proposal for the honour and advancement of the Arts, and that it be advertised in the Public and Daily Advertisers.

JOHN WILKES, President. FRA. MILNER NEWTON, Secretary."

At first sight it is a little surprising to find that the artists' President was John Wilkes, afterwards the famous adversary of George the Third and the founder of the *North Briton*. His presence on this occasion in such an exalted position is no doubt due to the fact that he was then Treasurer to the Foundling Hospital, in the Court Room of which the dinner was given.

In the Court Room, or the Governors' Room, as it was at one time called, were hung all the most important of the pictures presented from time to time by Hogarth, Highmore, Gainsborough and others, and they remained in the same positions on the walls until the Foundling Hospital was removed to Redhill in 1926.

The meeting of the artists at the Turk's Head took place as arranged on the 12th of November, when it was decided that an exhibition should be held in future every year in April. A charge of a shilling a head was to be imposed upon visitors to the exhibition and the profits were to be applied to the formation of a fund for the relief of old or infirm artists. Other meetings were held and further preliminaries settled, and by January, 1760, everything was arranged except the place of exhibition. This was difficult to find, for there were no proper galleries in existence at the time, but it was at length decided to approach the Society of Arts, which owned a large room in the Strand that could be adapted to the purpose. Hayman, therefore, wrote to the Society in February, enclosing particulars of the plan for an exhibition and asking for the use of the room.

This was granted by the Society of Arts, but subject to the condition that admission to the exhibition should be free—a condition that Hayman accepted with extreme reluctance, for in his opinion, and in those of his brother artists, a charge was necessary not only to raise funds but to keep out the lawless and violent mob of that day. However, it was agreed that although admission was to be free sixpence should be charged for a catalogue, and from the sum received for the catalogues we can judge of the great popularity and consequent crowding of the exhibition. The room at the Society of Arts was open only for a fortnight and was closed in the afternoons to all but members, yet 6,582 catalogues were sold.

That the room was packed during the hours of free admission is not surprising, for the opening of the exhibition must have given most of the poorer visitors their first opportunity of seeing pictures of decent quality. Some of them, it is likely, had never before seen any, as there were then no public galleries in England, and from the auction rooms, the only substitutes for them, Rouquet says that the lower classes were excluded. The good pictures in the country adorned the apartments of the rich, and access to them was difficult and costly, as we know by the frequent complaints at this period of the exactions of the ser-

vants in charge of the collections at the palaces and great houses. An angry correspondent of a newspaper in 1764, says of the difficulty of seeing these collections:—"The fawning, cringing addresses to those who have it in their power to show them, together with their gaping expectations of what you will give them, is very disagreeable; and what is still worse, if you do not satisfy them according to their liking it is ten to one but you are insulted."

In spite of its novelty and popularity the first English exhibition of contemporary art was not much noticed by the journals of the period. In 1760, and for many years afterwards, the press paid little attention to picture galleries or questions relating to the fine arts, and it was not until after 1770 that the newspapers began to review exhibitions systematically. In this work the journalist of 1760 was naturally inexperienced, but such scanty criticisms as exist of the first English exhibition are in some respects extremely interesting. They show that Reynolds, whose work until now had been seen only in his own studio or at the houses of his sitters, was already regarded as a man apart, and as the leader of the English school. In a review of the exhibition a correspondent of the *Imperial Magazine* says of the contributions of Reynolds:—

"This gentleman, whose merit is much beyond anything that can be said in his commendation, has obliged the public with four pieces of his hand; which are, a lady, whole length, said to be the Dutchess of Hamilton, but rather the Queen of all grace and beauty; another lady, supposed to be of the Albemarle family, of a most happy pencil; a gentleman, General Kingsley—and to say it is known by everybody is no praise at all; another of a gentleman in armour which wants nothing to be taken for a Vandyck but age only. In these pieces you see a copious and easy invention, the most graceful attitudes, great truth, sweetness, and harmony of colouring; a light bold, mellow and happy pencil; a thorough knowledge of the magic of lights and shadows, with all the parts of the art which constitute a perfect painter; and in short one living proof that genius is of all ages and countries and that Englishmen need not travel abroad to see fine things, would they but always study to cultivate and encourage genius at home."

As the writer supposed, the whole-length portrait of a lady represented the Duchess of Hamilton (one of the beautiful

Gunning sisters); the "lady of the Albemarle family" was Lady Elizabeth Keppel, and the gentleman in armour, Lord Vernon. The reference to General Kingsley is valuable, as it makes known for the first time the name of the original of the fourth portrait shown by Reynolds in 1760, which has not been identified by Mr. Graves.

In this review the work of Roubiliac is also mentioned with respect. The French sculptor showed among other things the model for his statue of Shakespeare, and a bust which this critic tells us represented Dr. Frewin. We learn from the same authority that one of the pastels exhibited by Vispre was a portrait of Roubiliac:—"the man himself, alive, breathing and just going to speak, most admirable, and himself never cut in marble a better." Another portrait commended for its exact resemblance, was that of Mr. Shipley, the first Registrar of the Society of Arts, who kept a well-known drawing school in the Strand. It was by his pupil, Richard Cosway, then a youth of twenty. Hayman's picture of Garrick as Richard the Third is praised extravagantly; and Francis Cotes is extolled, but at the same time reproved for devoting himself so much to pastel, a medium which the writer thought would not withstand the ravages of time. This critic of the first exhibition says little that is depreciatory. It is clear that he does not care for Highmore's work, but admits that it is admired by most who visit the gallery; and he lets down gently the historical picture by poor Samuel Wale, a sign painter and one of the shyest of men. "We shall say little of this, he may do better next time."

He praises highly the work of Adrien Carpentiers, the painter of the portrait of Roubiliac at work, modelling, that is now in the National Portrait Gallery. The critic appears to have known Carpentiers, as he tells us that he was born in Flanders, and describes one of his unnamed portraits in the exhibition as that of Zuccarelli the landscape painter, afterwards a Royal Academician. The writer of the life of Carpentiers in the *Dictionary of National Biography* conjectures that he was French or Swiss and that he came to England about 1760. But Carpentiers was here long before 1760. It is certain that he spent the summer and autumn of 1751 in Norfolk and Suffolk, presumably painting portraits, and staying at Ipswich, Bury and Norwich among other places.

Gainsborough, who had only just left Ipswich for Bath, and

PAUL SANDBY'S LANDSCAPES

whose work was little known in London in 1760, sent nothing to the first exhibition; but Richard Wilson contributed three canvases, "a large landscape with a study of Niobe, in a great manner, and two others equally excellent." It is pleasing to read of this admiration for Wilson's "great manner," but that manner, unfortunately, was not to the taste of most of the picture buyers of the period. Wilson found it difficult to sell, while the work of Paul Sandby, an artist far inferior, found many purchasers. How high Sandby stood at this time in the opinion of some of the fashionable connoisseurs will be seen from the following letter, from *The Harcourt Papers*, by William Mason, the biographer of the poet Gray, and the close friend of Reynolds, who contributed many notes to Mason's translation of Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*.

Writing in November, 1760, to Lord Nuneham, who was himself an exhibitor, Mason says:—

"Sandby has made such a picture! such a bard! such a head-long flood! such a Snowdon! such giant oaks! such desert caves! If it is not the best picture that has been painted this century in any country I'll give up all my taste to the Bench of Bishops (even to the Bishop who you know read one ode and not t'other) and ask not even a prebend in exchange.

"Put on your hat and feather, your red surtout, your Dresden cane, your ribband muff, put them on my Lord and take your *chaise de poste* and be pelted all the road for a French Marky, and depend on it you'll be amply rewarded by the sight of this picture. Then there's Roche Abbey too, every side and nook of the charmingest ruin in England. In a word Sandby improves as much in painting as your Lordship does in caprice, or Miss Chudleigh in fat, or Miss West in—in—charms; and in a short time will be that Claude Lorraine that Browne assured him he was at Lord Scarbro's in my hearing, and therefore desired him not to spoil a Claude by eating too many filberts."

Mason's ecstasies seem surprising when applied to the careful but uninspired landscapes of Paul Sandby, a worthy man and a good friend to Richard Wilson in his days of adversity, but by no means a great artist.

With the institution of annual exhibitions, and the foundation soon afterwards of two societies of artists, the Foundling Hospital lost its importance as a gathering place for painters and

sculptors. For this purpose the Turk's Head Tavern became yearly more popular, but the artists did not therefore immediately lose interest in the well-being of the children supported by the Hospital, many of whom were sent to Yorkshire to learn the art of making cloth. A curious proof of the artists' care for the children is still preserved in the shape of a sheet of paper covered with signatures made at a meeting held at the Turk's Head in December, 1760, a few months after the close of the first exhibition at the Society of Arts. The signatures are written beneath the following pledge:—"We whose names are hereunto subscribed agree to appear next fifth of November at the Artists' Feast at the Foundling Hospital in Lamb's Conduit Fields in a suit of clothes manufactured by the children of the Hospital at Acworth in Yorkshire, to be all of one colour, and that they be made in Yorkshire."

This quaintly worded promise is signed by a large number of artists, including Joshua Reynolds, Francis Milner Newton, Nathaniel Hone, George Michael Moser, William Chambers, Francis Hayman, Michael Angelo Rooker, Paul Sandby, Louis François Roubiliac, William Ryland, Henry Morland and Richard Wilson. I do not know whether the artists fulfilled their pledge. The dinner of 1761 was duly held at the Turk's Head on the 5th of November, and the ode sung on the occasion is quoted by the *St. James's Chronicle*, but nothing is said about the suits of clothes made by the children at Acworth.

The year 1760 was remarkable not only for the institution of open exhibitions, but for the accession of George the Third, who gave more encouragement to the fine arts than any King of England since Charles the First. Unfortunately George the Third was not a brilliant man and his patronage of the arts, if helpful upon the whole, was often misdirected. The monarch who could give lavish commissions to Benjamin West while neglecting Reynolds must have been sadly wanting in taste. It is true that he supported Gainsborough, but this is said to have been due to the influence of Queen Charlotte, who was a pupil of the Suffolk painter. But the King was at least interested in the arts and was proud of having some practical knowledge of them, acquired from Joseph Goupy, Joshua Kirby and other teachers. As Prince of Wales he was credited with the authorship of one of the designs in Kirby's book on perspective; and after his accession there were rumours that two landscapes exhibited by

Kirby at the gallery of the Incorporated Artists were really the work of his Majesty.

Nevertheless, George the Third, so far as we know, took no interest in the earlier exhibitions in the great room of the Society of Arts, the first of which resulted in a profit of about a hundred pounds, wholly derived from the sale of catalogues. Encouraged by this success the artists decided to approach the Society of Arts again, and to ask for the use of their room for a second exhibition to be held in the summer of 1761. A meeting was called at the Turk's Head on the 25th of November, 1760, at which, although Reynolds was present, Hayman was unanimously voted to the chair, and it was resolved:—

“That application be made to the Society of Arts for the use of the room. That the exhibition be at the beginning of June in order that the pictures offered for the premiums may be removed; the artists having found great inconvenience in lying under the imputation of losing those premiums for which they were not candidates.”

The question of the premium pictures was important to the artists. It was the custom of the Society of Arts to offer prizes for drawings and paintings in certain subjects, and to hang the works of the successful competitors in the great room in the spring. This arrangement had clashed in 1760 with the exhibition of the artists, among whose pictures were placed those that had gained the prizes offered by the Society of Arts. As the prize works bore labels indicating the nature and degree of the awards gained, many visitors to the exhibition believed that they had been adjudged the best pictures in the gallery and commiserated Reynolds, Cotes, Wilson and the rest for their supposed want of success. The artists, therefore, when asking for the use of the room in 1761 begged the Society to make other arrangements for the display of their premium works—“lest any man should a second time suffer the disgrace of having lost that which he never sought.”

They also proposed that at the second exhibition a shilling should be charged for the catalogue and that no one who did not purchase a catalogue should be admitted, because on the first occasion the room had been “crowded and incommoded by the intrusion of great numbers whose stations and education made them no proper judges of statuary or painting and who were made idle and tumultuous by the opportunity of a show.” The

Society of Arts not only rejected both these proposals but gave new powers to its Committee which put further negotiations out of the question. It was ordered by the Society:—"That the Committee have power to examine all such pieces as shall be sent in for the exhibition, with power to reject such as may be deemed improper"; and further, "That the same Committee may appoint the places where the several productions shall be exhibited."

As the artists were to be denied the right of arranging their own pictures they decided to break off the connection with the Society of Arts, and Joshua Reynolds and James Paine the architect were deputed to look about for a convenient place for an exhibition. This was soon found in the shape of a large room in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, then in the occupation of Cock the auctioneer, who agreed with William Chambers and Wilton the sculptor, on behalf of the artists, to let the room for the month of May for the sum of forty pounds. In spite of this defection the Society of Arts decided to hold a second exhibition in their room and to this many pictures were sent. However, the majority of the artists, including nearly all the men of importance, showed their work at Spring Gardens; and although the group at the Society of Arts developed into a regular institution in the following year its exhibitions were always third-rate and its influence small. But the rivalry helped to advertise both galleries; and the questions of the quarrels among the artists and of the respective merits of old and modern pictures, divided the town.

A lively newspaper correspondence which followed the opening of the two exhibitions in 1761 suggests that some of the members of the Society of Arts resented the creation of the Spring Gardens gallery, and affected to laugh at the pictures shown there, and at the way in which, as they alleged, they were puffed in the press. Hogarth, who exhibited this year at Spring Gardens, drew two illustrations for the catalogue, one of which was a tailpiece representing a monkey dressed as a dandy watering three dead trees growing in pots in the vain hope of restoring them to life. The trees, dated "Obit 1502," "Obit 1600" and "Obit 1604," were supposed to represent Old Masters whose works were unappreciated by Hogarth, and the monkey with his eyeglass and foreign air was the artist's idea of the connoisseur who estimates the value of a picture solely by its age. When Hogarth's design was published there was an idea that its satire

was particularly directed against those connoisseurs of the Society of Arts who supported the Old Masters and despised the modern works at Spring Gardens.

An amusing letter in which this view is taken was printed in the *St. James's Chronicle* soon after the opening of the exhibition. The writer describes himself as a young man educated at Eton and one of the Universities, and a lover of pictures and books. He had passed his life in the country with a scholarly uncle whose property he had lately inherited, and came to London only a few days before writing the letter, in which he says:—

“The first man I met in the town was Lord Brillus, an old schoolfellow of mine who I had heard was just returned from his travels. He accosted me with an affected ease in his manner, a shamle in his attitude, and a something of a half foreign accent. ‘My dear friend,’ he cried, ‘joy attend you—welcome to town! What new horses have you bred this year?’ ‘None,’ said I, ‘I have no fancy for the modern pleasure of the turf.’ He embraced me. ‘A man of taste, by all that’s agreeable! Come with me and help me to despise the wretched English daubs at Spring Gardens.’ I replied that I would attend him but would despise nothing merely because it was English or was to be seen at Spring Gardens.

“‘Come along,’ he said, ‘you shall despise them. I am a member of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts.’ ‘I am glad,’ said I, ‘that there is such a Society and that you are a member. I have heard of your exhibitions and long to see them. But why do you despise the artists you pretend to encourage?’

“‘Lord!’ says he, ‘why you know nothing. There is a wretched fellow, now, one Hogarth, has . . .’ ‘Hold,’ said I. ‘I know that Hogarth is the best painter of life and manners in the universe, and I know that I gave £12 or £14 for his prints and would not take five hundred for them.’ ‘Lord!’ said he again. ‘Hogarth! An absolute Bartholomew droll, who paints country elections and pretends to laugh at the connoisseurs.’

“We went up to the gallery and I soon caught sight of the tailpiece in the catalogue which I bought at the door. However, I followed his Lordship upstairs. ‘Heavens,’ said I, ‘what’s yonder, the unhappy Sigismonda with Guiscard’s heart? Would Dryden could but come to life again to see his thoughts

so expressed and coloured. Who did it, my Lord?' 'Hogarth,' said he, 'but it is quite out of his walk.' 'Hogarth,' said I, 'I could not have expected it, even from him. And pray who is that nobleman—a portrait I cannot call it, for he breathes?' 'Reynolds's Duke of Beaufort,' says he, 'but did you ever see a Vandyck?' 'Never any that beat this, my Lord, and I don't live far from Wilton neither.' I turned about—'A noble landscape that; bless me what colouring, what composition, what taste!' 'D'ye mean Wilson's Niobe?' says my Lord. 'What colouring indeed! None of the colouring of Claude's glowing backgrounds.'

"I had no longer patience. My Lord said—'Pray look at the tailpiece in the catalogue and see what you can make of it. It is your friend Hogarth's conceit, can you guess what he means by it?' It struck me at once. 'Pray, my Lord, do not ask me.' But he pressed the question. 'The author,' I said, 'of the Election and the Sigismonda can never draw anything without a meaning, and I swear I think this is very like.' 'Like who?' 'Just like your Lordship, upon my honour.' Here we parted and here I shall conclude by requesting you, Sir, to print this letter from an admirer, but thank God no Encourager, of the Polite Arts."

The Spring Gardens exhibition of 1761 was successful from the first day it was opened, and the newspaper puffs complained of by its enemies were not needed to draw the public to a gallery which contained five pictures by Reynolds, five by Hogarth, and the first work shown publicly by Gainsborough. The exhibition was described as that of the Society of Artists of Great Britain and a shilling paid for a catalogue ensured free admission so long as the pictures remained on view. This arrangement is mentioned in a letter written in May, 1761, by a young officer who had been asked by his father to send him descriptions of some of the pictures.

"When I entered the room," he says, "I was at a loss where first to fix my eyes, seeing so glaring a sight; but, as, Dear Sir, my turn is military, you'll excuse my not keeping the order of the catalogue, which has served me as a ticket for six or seven days. Mr. Scott's piece of the taking of Quebec gave me great pleasure: the French ships on fire are finely expressed. Not far from this is another picture of a general on Horseback, very different from the many modern and little inferior



Published according to Act of Parliament May 7, 1761.

Hogarth's Tail-Piece to the Society of Artists' Catalogue, 1761

to some of the greatest masters of the ancients. There is an officer of the Guards with a letter in his hand, ready to mount his horse with all that fire mixed with rage that war and the love of his country can give; in the background a view of a skirmish. These pieces by Mr. Reynolds give me great satisfaction. I hope that gentleman will oblige the world with a print of them, which if he does he will have military subscribers enough. By the same ingenious person is a nobleman in his college robes, a very fine piece."

The portraits of officers admired by the young soldier were those of Lord Ligonier and Captain Orme, both of which are in the National Gallery. The nobleman in his college robes was the Duke of Beaufort. Another portrait by Reynolds admired by the same visitor was that of Sterne "in as facetious a humour as if he would tell you a story of Tristram Shandy"; and he was overcome with admiration for a picture by Hudson of a lady leaning on a table, "the deception is so great you'd swear it was a real table." This amateur critic praises highly Roubiliac's busts of Lord Ligonier and Joseph Wilton the sculptor, "both very fine," and mentions Hogarth's *Sigismonda* as "an expressive piece."

The last named is the *Sigismonda mourning over the heart of Guiscardo*, now in the National Gallery. It was painted in 1759 for Sir Richard Grosvenor, who, to the intense disappointment and annoyance of the painter, declined to take the picture when it was finished. According to a note written in a catalogue of the exhibition of 1761, preserved in the library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the *Sigismonda* was only shown during a part of the season. The note, which is written in ink and appears to be contemporary, says of Hogarth's picture:—"About the 19th or 20th (of May) it was taken away and another of the same hand placed in its stead—subject Chairing a member at an Election." There is nothing in the official records of the Society of Artists of Great Britain about the substitution of another canvas for the *Sigismonda*, which may perhaps be explained by a story told some years afterwards by Philip Thicknesse, a friend of Hogarth and one of the original subscribers for an engraving of this picture which its author proposed to publish.

Thicknesse told his story as an example of the occasional value of criticisms made by people without expert knowledge. When the *Queen Charlotte* man-of-war was launched at Chatham her figurehead was a carved portrait of the Consort of George the

Third which claimed to be exact down to the smallest detail and was admired by all who saw it with the exception of a labourer in the dockyard. He declared that the image could not represent the King's wife because the left hand bore no wedding ring, an important omission which had escaped the eyes of all the better-educated observers. The incident was reported in the *St. James's Chronicle* and in the next issue of that journal the following comment by Thicknesse appeared:—

“The countryman's shrewd observation on the figure at the head of the *Queen Charlotte* ship of war, reminds me of Hogarth's *Sigismonda*. He placed that picture (which in spite of all the critics could say about it had infinite merit) in view of the public, and at the same time placed a man to write down all the objections made to it. Of these there were a hundred at least, but Hogarth told the writer of this that he attended but to one—and that was made by a madman!—and perceiving the objection was well founded he altered the picture. The madman after looking steadily at the *Sigismonda* suddenly turned away, saying ‘Damn it, I hate those white roses.’ Hogarth then, and not till then, observed that the foldings of *Sigismonda's* shift sleeves were too regular and had more the appearance of roses than of linen.”

As there is no mention of the public exhibition of the *Sigismonda* during Hogarth's lifetime, except at Spring Gardens, it seems not unlikely that it was there that the artist posted his observer, whose reports, if truthfully given, may have influenced Hogarth more than Thicknesse admits. He had taken infinite trouble over the picture, for which his wife had sat. Any criticism of it, therefore, touched him nearly and although the *Sigismonda* was praised by the amateurs I have just mentioned, harsh things were said of it by other visitors to Spring Gardens. Dr. Birch, who knew Hogarth well, when writing to a friend two years afterwards about the painter's quarrel with Wilkes and Churchill and the publication of Churchill's *Poetical Epistle to Hogarth*, incidentally refers to the unfavourable comments made on his picture in 1761:—

“Hogarth, who has all his life dealt in satire in his way, is rendered extremely unhappy by the attack upon him in the *North Briton* and other papers, and by the apprehensions of the threatened poem by Churchill, which it is to be imagined will be almost a death's wound to him. His vanity with his success

always made him impatient of any mortification, so that Lord Grosvenor's refusal to take his *Sigismonda*, and the contempt shown it at the exhibition, were a shock that near overset him."

Chairing a Member at an Election was perhaps substituted for the original picture at Spring Gardens because Hogarth could not endure the "contempt" for the *Sigismonda* of which Dr. Birch speaks, or because he wished to repaint the white sleeves, whose folds to-day certainly bear no resemblance to white roses.

The exhibition at Spring Gardens in 1761 was the first held in England that was entirely under the management of artists, who are not, as a rule, good men of business. However, on this occasion they appear to have worked on careful and economical lines, for the only item in their accounts that can be challenged as extravagant is the sum of £52 13s. 10d., paid for illuminating the premises on the night of the fourth of June, the King's birthday. Of this sum £2 14s. was for rockets, presumably fired from the roof of the gallery. The entire cost of hanging the pictures in the exhibition and taking them down again was only £7 18s. 3½d. At the present time the similar expenses in connection with the summer exhibition of the Royal Academy run into some hundreds of pounds. Economical as they were, the members of the Society of Artists of Great Britain seem to have endeavoured to preserve a certain state and dignity at their deliberations at the Turk's Head Tavern, as there is a record in the accounts of a guinea paid for two constables to stand at the door of the tavern while they were in session.

Meanwhile at the rival exhibition of the Society of Arts the free admission of the public had led to serious disturbances. The Society after its experience of the rough element—"the idle and tumultuous"—in the previous year, provided two constables to keep the peace at the exhibition of 1761. As these proved insufficient four more were engaged. Still the mob was triumphant, and at a special meeting of the Society it was resolved "that a discretionary power be given to Mr. Blake to employ eight or more constables, and to give orders as he shall think requisite relative to the Exhibition." The unruliness of the crowd may be imagined when it is remembered that all these constables were necessary to keep order in a single room.

Yet in spite of the disturbances of two seasons the Society of Arts persisted in its policy of free admissions and the troubles of 1760 and 1761 were repeated in the following year. It is true

that tickets were now required for admission, but these were given to anybody and were practically unlimited in number. The writer of a letter in May, 1762, complains that thousands have been distributed, and adds:—

“Who can examine a beautiful picture with advantage or pleasure in a sweating room, choked with clouds of dust and as rudely肘ed as if in Bartholomew Fair? While I was waiting the other day for an opportunity to squeeze through the crowd at the door, one of those gentlemen who, like Joseph, wear coats of many colours, was attempting to introduce some of the ladies who twirl the mop so invitingly on a Saturday morning. The man, however, who held the staff of authority at the door stopped him short. ‘Sir, I cannot admit you in that coat.’ ‘Why,’ says he, ‘I have got a ticket.’ ‘If you had ten tickets you should not go in unless you change your coat.’ ‘Well, if you will not let me in you will not refuse the ladies?’ ‘No, Sir! by no means!’ exclaimed the sweet girls, ‘if you will not let the gentleman in we will not go in without him.’ How the dispute ended I do not know, but I suppose the gentleman went home and put on his thickset coat, or borrowed one from a fellow servant and then saw the show.”

In conclusion the writer appeals to the members of the Society of Arts to reform their arrangements. “For shame, gentlemen,” he says, “let your servants wait till fair-time and then accommodate them with pence to see the exhibitions of Messrs. Shuter and Yates; do not affront your institution by displaying the fruits of it to the ignorant.” The gentleman in the coat of many colours was turned away from the doors of the gallery by virtue of a special regulation that “No servant in Livery shall be admitted on any pretence whatever,” for much of the trouble at the exhibitions of 1760 and 1761 was due to the misbehaviour of “those most baneful, idle, insolent banditti,” as a writer of the same period describes them.

At the Spring Gardens exhibition of 1761 there were no complaints of disorder because, as we have seen, no visitor was admitted until he had paid a shilling for a catalogue, which served as a season ticket. This arrangement had worked well, but in 1762 the Society of Artists of Great Britain decided to abandon it and to charge a shilling for each admission. The reasons for this change of plan are set forth in a preface to the catalogue of 1762, which although anonymous has always been ascribed

THE PREFACE TO THE CATALOGUE

to the pen of Dr. Johnson. Boswell includes it in the list of Johnson's works printed at the end of the famous biography but admits that his attribution is based only on internal evidence. An entry in the minutes of the Society, made on the 20th of April, just before the opening of the exhibition of 1762, seems to suggest that the preface was written by Reynolds, not Johnson. "Mr. Reynolds having presented a preface it was agreed to and ordered to be printed." Johnson had been asked more than a month before to supply a motto for the catalogue to accompany a design "agreeable thereto" to be drawn by Hayman. The name of Johnson does not appear again in the matter and there is nothing to show whether it was he who chose the quotation from Martial that appears on the frontispiece of the catalogue. But the design on the frontispiece in which a figure of Britannia is the principal object was drawn by Samuel Wale.

In the preface to the catalogue it was announced that as many artists of ability were unable to obtain proper prices for their pictures a sale to which they could be sent would be held at the close of the exhibition. "These works will be reviewed by the Committee that conduct the exhibition, a price will be secretly set on every piece and registered by the secretary; if the piece is sold for more the whole price shall be the artist's, but if the purchasers value it at less than the committee the artist shall be paid the deficiency from the profits of the exhibition." This well-meant but ill-devised scheme was carried out in 1762. The loss to the Society was considerable and it was not repeated.

Reynolds showed at this exhibition his portrait of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy (which he began and finished in a week) and others of Lady Elizabeth Keppel and Countess Waldegrave. These are all of which we have any official record, but according to the *St. James's Chronicle* the exhibition contained a fourth work by Reynolds. The critic of this journal, after praising the whole length of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, says:—

"There is another portrait by the same hand, unnumbered and unregistered in the catalogue, which hangs at the other end of the room and represents a young lady well known in the town by the name of Miss Nelly O'Brien. It is a very good piece but the arms are, I think, too red."

Nelly O'Brien had been sitting to Reynolds in the previous autumn. He painted her several times.

The critic to whom we owe the discovery that Reynolds

exhibited a fourth canvas in 1762 was quick to appreciate the ability of Zoffany, who this year made his first appearance as an exhibitor in England. Under the heading "Mr. Zaffani," he writes:—

"The name of this gentleman, which is but of late date in the school of painting, is no mean addition to the catalogue of artists. The *Farmer's Return*, No. 138, is a most accurate representation on canvas of that scene as performed at Drury Lane. The painter absolutely transports us in imagination back again to the theatre. We see our favourite Garrick in the act of saying, *for yes, she knocked once—and for no she knocked twice*. And we see the wife and children—and we saw them on the stage—in terror and amazement; such strong likenesses has the painter exhibited of the several performers that played the characters. There is a gentleman's head by the same hand which is a good portrait."

Zoffany's picture represents the scene in Garrick's interlude, *The Farmer's Return to London*, in which the farmer tells the story of his supposed adventure with the Cock Lane Ghost. The interlude, written to assist Mrs. Pritchard, at whose benefit it was first performed, was dedicated by Garrick to Hogarth, who sketched the farmer and his family in a frontispiece to the printed version.

Hogarth, no doubt disappointed with the reception of his work in 1761, sent nothing to the exhibition of the Society of Artists in 1762, but it is believed that a few touches from his hand adorned some of the singular contributions to the Sign Painters' exhibition of that year. The Sign Painters' exhibition was organized by Bonnel Thornton, at whose house in Bow Street it was held, and was regarded by many as a caricature of those of the artists. On that account some of the papers refused its advertisements. One of them, the *London Evening Post*, said in an editorial paragraph:—"As it is imagined by the public in general that the Exhibition of a pretended Society of Sign Painters is intended as a burlesque upon the laudable Society for the encouragements of arts and sciences, no advertisements shall appear in this paper anyways tending to a reflection on so honourable and respectable a body."

The Society of Arts exhibition is mentioned because it was the only one open at the time the paragraph was published, but that of the Society of Artists which opened later in the season

was supposed to be equally a mark for the satire of the Sign Painters. They, however, claimed in some amusing advertisements to be a serious society with no intention of burlesque, and claimed too that their exhibition attracted a much larger public than the others. If the Sign Painters could be believed all the seats in the stage coaches from the North of England were booked up by people hastening to town to see their show, and in one of their announcements they describe the anxiety of a pushing reporter of 1762 to obtain early admission to the gallery:—

“At the opening of the doors in rushed a gentleman, as he called himself and proved himself by swearing at the door-keepers and attempting to obtain admission without purchasing a catalogue. However, he got a peep at the Exhibition through the passage, and wrote a complete account of it which was the next day printed in the *Gazetteer*.”

The whole exhibition was, of course, nothing but a joke, but it was condemned as an imposition by the *St. James's Chronicle*, which concluded an article on the affair by saying that it was “a most scandalous abuse and bubble. The best entertainment it can afford is that of standing in the street and observing with how much shame in their faces the people come out of the house.”

In the next year, 1763, Gainsborough, then living at Bath, began seriously to challenge the London portrait painters. It was in 1763 he sent to Spring Gardens his full length of Mr. Medlycott, “a sprightly and elegant figure” in the words of the youthful Ozias Humphry, who saw the canvas at Gainsborough's house; and his portrait of Quin the actor, which aroused some jealousy among the London artists, as we know from a letter written by Garrick. Walpole praises the Medlycott portrait (“very natural”) in what is, I think, his earliest reference to the work of Gainsborough. The principal contribution by Reynolds in 1763, the portraits on one canvas of the Ladies Elizabeth and Henrietta Montagu, was not much admired by Walpole, who thought it chalky in appearance. Walpole regarded as the best portrait in the exhibition of 1763 that by Francis Cotes of William O'Brien, a handsome young actor whose elopement in the following year with a daughter of the first Lord Ilchester caused a sensation in the social and artistic worlds of London.

O'Brien, “distinguished as the most perfect representative of the Man of Fashion that had ever been seen on the stage,” was at this time a frequent visitor to Holland House, Kensington,

where private theatricals were then a favourite pastime. It was here, when taking part in the performances, that he met Lady Susan Fox who fell in love with him and agreed to meet him secretly at the studio of Catherine Read the portrait painter, to whom Lady Susan was then sitting. The fact that she was meeting O'Brien came to the knowledge of her parents, and she was obliged to confess her attachment to the actor. Lord Ilchester, who tells the story in his *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, says:—

“She promised to break off the intimacy but insisted on being allowed a private farewell interview with him. The supposed leave-taking took place on the first or second of April. On Friday, the fifth, Lady Susan came of age; and on Saturday the sixth she walked out early in the morning, saying she was going to breakfast with Lady Sarah Bunbury before going to Miss Read for a sitting. When in the street she pretended to have forgotten a particular cap she was being painted in and desired the footman who was attending her to go back and get it and bring it to Miss Read’s. Mr. O’Brien was near at hand awaiting her and they drove in a hackney coach to Covent Garden Church, where they were married, and then went on to Mr. O’Brien’s villa at Dunstable from whence she informed her parents of the step she had taken. The consternation and indignation of the whole family was beyond belief and it was several years before Lord Ilchester forgave her, and then only at the earnest request of Lady Ilchester and Lord Holland. The latter treated Lady Susan with extreme kindness and generosity and promised her an annuity of £400 a year for three years.”

However, the angry father appears to have paid some of O'Brien’s debts, though not without protest. Lady Sarah Lennox in one of her letters to the bride says that of all the bills he was asked to pay the one that annoyed him most was that of Cotes for the portrait of O'Brien—the portrait exhibited at Spring Gardens.

In the autumn of 1763, on St. Luke’s Day, the members of the Society of Artists of Great Britain dined together for the first time, at their headquarters, the Turk’s Head Tavern. The company, which numbered about sixty, included Francis Hayman, Joshua Reynolds, Paul Sandby, Thomas Hudson, Richard Dalton, Francis Milner Newton, John Hamilton Mortimer,

A DINNER AT THE TURK'S HEAD TAVERN

George Lambert, Michael Rysbrach, Richard Wilson, George Dance, James Paine, Francis Cotes, George Michael Moser and Joseph Wilton. Hogarth was not present; nor was Gainsborough, who although he exhibited with the artists in Spring Gardens and sometimes came up from Bath to attend meetings, took no part in their festivities.

The artists' dinner of 1763, which was the forerunner of the famous annual banquet given by the Royal Academy, was a very modest affair in comparison with its successors. The caterer was John Weight, the landlord of the Turk's Head, who provided for the first course of the dinner, Cod's Head and Sauce, Stewed Carp, Soles and Whittings. The second course included, in addition to an Ox Head at the end of the table in front of the chairman, Marrow Pudding, Fowls, Geese, Veal Pie, Salad, Beefsteak Pie, Greens and Carrots, and Fried Soles and Ham.

The following is a copy of the bill for the dinner, the original of which, written on a very small piece of paper, is among the Society's records preserved at the Royal Academy:—

“1763, October 18.

	£	s.	d.
Dinners for sixty	9	0	0
56 (Wine) tickets at 2s.	5	12	0
45 Tankards Porter		16	10½
24 Papers of Tobacco		2	0
Lemons and Sugar		18	0
	£16	3	10½
Extra for Ham and two Geese		1	7 0
	17	10	10½

Received the full contents of this bill and all demands
by me

JOHN WEIGHT.”

In addition the artists gave half a guinea to the waiters, five and threepence to the cook, and half a guinea to “John.” This was John Malin, the porter at the St. Martin's Lane Academy, who from 1763 until 1768, the year of the foundation of the Royal Academy, was in attendance at the dinners of the Society of Artists. John Malin was originally a waterman, and in his boat

Roubiliac was conveyed to Vauxhall when he went there to plan his figure of Handel. He afterwards sat as a model to Roubiliac and obtained the post of porter to the Academy. Ozias Humphry painted a miniature of him which was exhibited at the gallery of the Society of Artists (No. 71) in 1766, and was bought by the King.

Malin appears to have been known to Walpole, at least by sight, for he wrote against No. 71 in his catalogue of the exhibition, "Good head of Old John, Porter of the Academy." He held this post until March, 1769, when the minutes of the Society record that "John Malin, Porter and Messenger to the Society being rendered incapable by age and illness of attending the Society, and having desired to resign, Edward Townshend who has been under him is appointed in his place." Malin died a few months after his resignation, and on account of his "long and faithful service" the cost of his funeral was defrayed by the members of the newly founded Royal Academy, all of whom had formerly belonged to the Society of Artists. Mrs. Malin was afterwards for many years housekeeper to the Royal Academy.

St. Luke's Day 1763

Account of the Expenses

M^r for: Wilton, Stewards
M^r E. Rooker }

Cash rec ^d of 6 th at £ 5.00	M ^r Wrights Bill -	17. 10. 10
6. 19. 4. 0	Gave the Cook -	5. 3
D ^r of a quart a bottle - 2. 0	Waiters -	10. 6
£ 19. 6. 0	John -	10. 6
	Paper Tickets -	3. 0
		19. 11. 1
	Decorations for the -	2. 6
	Chester Head -	2. 6
	Paid for this Book -	2. 6
		19. 5. 4

1763. St. Luke's Day

Oct^r: 16th L^d 2

Dinner for -	60/9. 0. 0
56 Tickets each - 2/	5. 12. 0
45 Tenhards Porter -	0. 16. 10
24 Papers of Tobacco -	0. 2. 0
Lemons & Sugar -	0. 13. 0
	£ 16. 3. 10
Intro: for Ham & Cheese -	1. 7. 0
	£ 17. 10. 10

Rec^d: The full Contents of
this Bill and all Demands
by me John Wright

By permission of the Royal Academy of Arts

Bills of the First Dinner of the Society of Artists, St. Luke's Day, 1763

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Foundation of the Free Society of Artists; Its exhibitions in the Society of Arts' gallery; A quarrel with the Society of Arts; Exhibits in Pall Mall; Bembidge the American painter; His portrait of Paoli purchased by the Free Society; Boswell and Paoli; The Free Society founds an Academy for drawing and painting; Its charities to artists; Picture frames lent to members; Romney's connection with the Free Society; Early criticisms of his exhibited work; "In the style of Mr. Reynolds"; Romney awarded a premium by the Society of Arts; The judgment reversed; Alleged adverse influence of Reynolds; The true story of the affair; A forgotten Society, the "Polite Artists"; Benjamin West arrives in England; His first glimpse of London; Story of his Philadelphia friend Williams; Walpole's account of West in 1764; His father's profession?; Painting in bed; William Patoun.

SOON after the secession of the Spring Gardens group of artists, the painters, sculptors and engravers who had remained faithful to the Society of Arts combined to form what was known as the Free Society of Artists. George James, afterwards an Associate of the Royal Academy, was elected President, and John Finlayson the engraver, Secretary. The by-laws of the institution ordained:—"That this Society of Artists being the first ever formed in these kingdoms, in the year 1762, and enrolled as a legal institution, it is resolved that it be preserved for ever free and independent of any other Society." An exhibition was held in 1763 in the arrangement of which the Society of Arts must have allowed the Free Society some share, as one of its members, Thomas Keyse the beef and mutton painter, was among the hangers; and at a meeting of the Society of Arts in March, 1764, it was proposed that the exhibition of that year should be held as usual in the great room and that the choice and placing of the pictures should be entrusted to a committee of the Society, assisted by certain of the Free Artists whose names were announced.

This was a vast improvement on the regulation of 1761, by which the Society of Arts arrogated to itself the sole right of selection and arrangement, but it did not meet with the approval of many of the Free Artists who attended the meeting. Forty of them presented a written protest in which exception was taken to some of the artists who were appointed to assist the Chairman of the Committee. This led to a long and angry discussion in the course of which a counter remonstrance was brought forward signed by nearly fifty other members of the Free Society all of

whom supported the list of the hanging committee as at first proposed. The report of the meeting concludes:—"It was at length unanimously and prudently determined by the Society of Arts that not one artist of any kind should have the least part in this management, but that the list of names should be filled up by other members of the Society."

Despite this ignominious treatment the members of the Free Society endeavoured in 1765 again to obtain the room of the Society of Arts, but their application was refused and they were forced to seek other quarters. These were found in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, a narrow thoroughfare that afterwards became famous as containing the birthplace of Turner, and in Maiden Lane the Free Society exhibited in 1765 and 1766. In 1767 they engaged "the Great New Room in Pall Mall, late Mr. Lambe's," and again in 1768. But the premises now belonged to Dalton, who was carrying on a printselling business in the house to which the room was attached, and in May, 1768, the Society was informed that it would not be available for another season, probably because it was required for the art school founded about this time, and taken over by the Royal Academy when it was established later in the same year. The Academy remained in possession and held its exhibitions in the room until 1779.

Therefore the Free Artists were obliged to make other arrangements and had decided to build a gallery, when they became associated with James Christie, the auctioneer, who had sometimes held sales in the room they were now vacating. Christie, who was also seeking for new quarters, had found them at the other end of Pall Mall, close to Schomberg House, and he agreed to build a room suitable for exhibitions and let it to the Society for a month in each year at a rent of forty-five guineas, on a lease of twenty-one years. Judging by the following advertisement, published on the 12th of December, 1768, Christie was guided by the advice of the Free Artists in the design and lighting of his new room:—

"To the Virtu and the Public in general. Mr. Christie begs leave to inform them that his new auction Room in Pall Mall will be completed in a few days, and from its being mechanically constructed under the immediate direction of some of the first artists in the kingdom with respect to the justness of proportion, the repose of light, together with its magnitude and desirable situation, he hopes are motives sufficient to show the

natural advantages that must accrue to those who shall favour him with their commands, which shall be faithfully attended to and executed with the utmost integrity.”

When the contract was made with Christie the President of the Society was Arthur Devis, the painter of the small whole length *Portrait of a Lady in a Park*, acquired by the National Gallery in 1918. Devis, who was a faithful supporter of the Free Society and exhibited only at its gallery, was succeeded in the Presidential chair by Henry Robert Morland, the father of George Morland. He was elected in 1769, in which year the minutes of the Society record that the members agreed in future to omit the word “Free” from the title: “it appearing upon examination to have been unintentionally interpolated.” In 1770, therefore, the adjective was dropped, but it was restored to the title in 1782 and as the Free Society of Artists the institution has always been known. The word “Free” seems to have had a particular attraction for the painters of the period, for it was once proposed to apply it to the rival Society of Artists at Spring Gardens. This was the idea of Hogarth, who in 1761 made a motion “that the Society for the future should be called the Free Professors of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture.” The motion was agreed to unanimously, but the title was never used.

In 1769 the principal attraction at the exhibition of the Free Society was a portrait of the Corsican patriot Pascal Paoli by the American artist, Henry Bembridge. The affairs of Corsica were attracting attention in England at this time and Paoli’s attempted defence of his native island against the French had made him a popular hero; especially in the eyes of that prince of hero-worshippers, James Boswell. He had made Paoli’s acquaintance in Corsica a year or two earlier, and the following announcement, which appeared in the newspapers in the spring of 1769, shows that it was he who commissioned Bembridge to paint the portrait:—

“There is now arrived in London a portrait of the illustrious chief, Paoli, painted for Mr. Boswell of Auchinleck. Mr. Boswell sent for this purpose to Corsica last summer Mr. Henry Bembridge, a young American artist who had finished his studies in Italy, and amidst all the fatigues and dangers of war His Excellency was pleased to sit, to indulge the earnest desire of his ever zealous friend. When the picture was brought to Leghorn all who had seen the General thought it a striking

likeness. The Grand Duke of Tuscany expressed a desire to see it, upon which it was sent to Florence, where it was much admired by the Grand Duke and Duchess and all about the Court. It is a whole length as large as life; the canvas about seven feet by five. The painter has taken great pains and has finished the face in a very masterly manner. The attitude is very graceful, the body erect, the left hand akimbo, the right hand extended with a truncheon bearing on a rock. The drapery green and gold and the hair drest in the modern taste."

A correspondent of the *Public Advertiser* says in a letter published late in May that he has visited all the picture exhibitions and that the most crowded was that of the Free Society, held in the gallery in Pall Mall, next door to Cumberland House:—

"A fine whole length picture of Paoli draws abundance of people of fashion there. . . . Whilst I was observing the picture a gentleman entered the room, and coming near the place where I stood informed me and several others that he was just arrived from Corsica where he had spent above a month and had been very politely entertained by Paoli; he said the picture was very like him, but that now he was thinner than when the picture was drawn, which may be easily accounted for. He presented a piece of the Corsican coin to an old gentleman in spectacles attending the room."

Bembridge's portrait has disappeared, but we can see by the engraving made in the year of the exhibition that he represented the Corsican hero as a man of unromantic plumpness. The statement that the American artist's work drew crowds to the exhibition is certainly true, for the receipts of the Free Society which were only £142 8s. in 1768, rose to £526 9s. in 1769. The expenses of the 1769 exhibition were high, £262 16s.; but they were swollen by one remarkable item for which I can offer no explanation, "£130, paid for Paoli's picture." There seems to be no conceivable reason why this small society of artists should spend half its net income for the year on a portrait of a man with whom it had no concern; a portrait which, apparently, was purchased from Boswell.

Henry Bembridge, who was trained in Italy, where West was his fellow-student and Patch drew his portrait, exhibited two portraits at the Royal Academy in 1770, one of which was that of Benjamin Franklin. He appears to have returned to America before 1773, as in that year Dr. Morgan of Philadelphia, writing



Henry Bembridge, the American Painter

From a Drawing by Thomas Patch

to James Byers at Rome, mentions a visit to Charlestown, where, he says, "I saw Mr. Bembridge who is settled very advantageously there and prosecutes his profession with reputation and success." It is not known if Bembridge ever worked in London.

The agreement made with Christie for the use of the premises in Pall Mall remained in force for six years, but not without occasional friction, as the auctioneer sometimes wanted to use the room for an important sale at the period chosen by the Free Society for its exhibition. The friction increasing, the members in 1774 accepted an offer to exchange the room in Pall Mall for another that belonged to Christie, situated close by in St. Alban's Street. Here, in the following year, the Society made a feeble attempt to emulate the Royal Academy by founding, in conjunction with the exhibition, a rival school of drawing and painting. The school was a failure, and in 1776 its furniture and fittings were sold to one of the members of the Society, the drawing master John James Barralet, who carried it on for some time as a private class.

Exhibitions continued to be held from time to time, but unsuccessfully, and in 1780 the gross receipts were only £21 9s. The last exhibition was held in 1783, and to this Gainsborough, Bartolozzi, De Louthembourg, and Angelica Kauffman were induced to contribute. But the aid of these artists was given too late. The exhibition of 1783 was the final effort of the Free Society, and after this year nothing more is heard of its affairs, although it is known to have been in existence in 1786, when the Incorporated Society of Artists, then in a desperate financial position, applied to it for a loan of £200. At the same time the Incorporated Society proposed that the two bodies should be merged and exhibit together in future, but there is nothing to show that a favourable reception was given either to the application or the proposal.

One of the objects of the Free Society was to form from the profits of its exhibitions a charitable fund for the relief of infirm or indigent artists and their families. Some of the profits were thus bestowed immediately after the close of the first exhibition of 1762, and the almoner was Gabriel Mathias, who was both a painter and the holder of an appointment in the Office of the Privy Purse. Mathias was the official through whom, some years afterwards, the King paid his subsidies towards the upkeep of the Royal Academy. The Free Society's fund was so well adminis-

tered that by 1770 the sum of £1,100 had accumulated, the interest of which was set aside for the assistance of widows and children of deceased members. There are, however, frequent references to other charitable gifts in the Society's minutes. In 1771 ten guineas was voted to "Mr. Vandyke," then in distress. The bearer of this great name was Peter Vandyke the portrait painter—perhaps the Vandyke who was Allan Ramsay's assistant—who exhibited a number of works between 1762 and 1772.

The charities of the Free Society extended even to frames, of which it possessed a number ready to be lent to artists who wished to send works to the exhibition but could not afford the necessary environments. In a statement published in the catalogue of the last exhibition held in 1783 it is claimed that

"from the commencement of this association not a single member afflicted with sickness, etc., ever applied in vain; they have been relieved with from three, five, ten, fifteen, twenty, up to one hundred guineas each; and besides the cash in the Treasurer's hands this Society hath now in the Bank £1,200 Three Per Cents which cannot be alienated from the above purposes in the plan on any pretence whatever."

It would be interesting to know what has become of this inalienable fund.

As the Free Society was at first composed almost entirely of third- or fourth-rate painters, and gained few supporters afterwards of any promise, the names and works of the great majority of its members have passed into oblivion. Its chief claim to distinction is that fifteen of the twenty-five pictures exhibited by Romney were shown in its galleries. Romney was a member of the Free Society and was placed on the Hanging Committee in 1768, but there is no record that he served on the Committee or took any part in the management of the institution. It was at the Free Society's exhibition in 1765 that one of his pictures attracted, I think for the first time, the attention of a newspaper critic, whose opinion was unfavourable. The picture was No. 157, *A Lady's Head in the character of a Saint*, and the newspaper the *Public Advertiser*, whose reviewer wrote scornfully "This saint is likely to have but few votaries." In 1767 the *Portrait of two sisters, half length* was noticed by two or three journals, including the *Gazetteer* by which it was described as "a fine picture in the style of Mr. Reynolds."

The suggestion that he was a follower of Reynolds could not

have been pleasant for Romney, some of whose friends believed that four years earlier the elder artist had prejudiced his chances in a competition at the Society of Arts. In 1763 the Society offered prizes of a hundred guineas and fifty guineas respectively for the best historical paintings submitted, and Romney, who had but recently arrived in London from Kendal, sent in a picture, *The Death of General Wolfe*.

Richard Cumberland, writing long afterwards about this competition, said that the Committee of the Society of Arts awarded Romney the second premium "though not without some dissension"; but that at a second examination "the decree was reversed, and Romney, friendless, unknown, was set aside in favour of a rival better supported; a hardship so obvious and a partiality so glaring that the Committee could not face the transaction but voted him a premium extraordinary, nearly, if not quite, the amount of the prize he had been deprived of." John Romney, in his life of his father, accepts Cumberland's statement, and in some bitter comments upon it, declares that the first judgment was reversed owing to the influence of Reynolds who was jealous of Romney and was at the same time the friend of Mortimer, to whom the second prize was ultimately awarded. Romney himself, according to Hayley, also believed that the reversal of the first decision was due to Reynolds, but said that it was just and that Mortimer deserved the prize. It is curious that Mortimer said that Romney deserved it, not because his picture was the best but because it was painted "in a room so small that he could not examine the effect of the whole at a single view and at a proper distance, and that under this disadvantage his performance was surprising."

Those who consult the records of the Society of Arts will find that the reconsideration of the award which deprived Romney of the second prize in 1763 was brought about neither by "glaring partiality" nor the jealousy of Reynolds. The records show that the historical pictures were judged in the first instance by a small "Committee of the Polite Arts," which recommended on the 17th of March that the first prize of a hundred guineas should be given to Robert Edge Pine and the second of fifty guineas to Romney. This judgment, however, was subject to the approval of the members at large who, at a meeting extraordinary held on the 21st, ratified the award to Pine but gave the second prize to Mortimer instead of to Romney. The amended awards were con-

firmed by eighty-eight votes to seventy-three at a general meeting of the Society of Arts, held two days later, and at the same meeting it was decided to give a "bounty" of twenty-five guineas to Romney.

Reynolds at this time belonged to the Society, but he was not a member of the Committee of the Polite Arts and his name does not appear in connection with any of the proceedings. He may have attended and voted at the extraordinary and general meetings, but it does not seem possible that his influence if exerted on behalf of Mortimer could have affected so large an electorate. It should be remembered that the competition took place long before the foundation of the Royal Academy and when Reynolds was a comparatively young man. Nor was he in 1763 on particularly good terms with the Society of Arts, for he was one of the leaders of the artists who had deserted the Society in 1761 to found the rival exhibition at Spring Gardens.

Revisions of the awards of the Committee of the Polite Arts were not uncommon at this period, and although Romney suffered in 1763 he was the gainer by a revision in 1765 when the Society of Arts held another competition for prizes for historical painting. The Committee then recommended that the second prize of fifty guineas should be withheld, but this was negated by the vote of the meeting extraordinary, which gave it to Romney. The first prize of sixty guineas was awarded to Hugh Hamilton, and in 1764 there was another reversal of awards at the Society of Arts, though in a different section. Certain premiums had been offered for the best examples of quilting, done in the Indian manner, and the awards were made by a Committee. But when the Committee presented its report:—"the Society, after warm debates, reversed the premiums. To that which the Committee had adjudged the first prize the Society gave the second; and to that to which the Committee had adjudged the second the Society gave the first."

The title of the Committee of the Society of Arts seems affected to-day, but the term "Polite" had a wider significance in the eighteenth century and was adopted in the designation of a body of painters of whom the only remaining records are some advertisements in the newspapers of 1768. So far as I am aware no historian has mentioned the existence of the Society known as the "Polite Artists of Great Britain" whose members held an exhibition in 1768 in the great room in Maiden Lane which had been

tenanted by the Free Society before its removal to Pall Mall. The chief attraction of the exhibition was "a fine picture of John Wilkes, Esq.," who was chosen in this year to represent Middlesex in Parliament, and "the curious, and every lover of liberty" were invited to see it. Of the nature and quality of the other canvases exhibited nothing is known, but it is likely that the standard was low as there was no Selecting Committee and a place was given to every work sent in "without partiality or exception." The grammar of the Polite Artists left much to be desired. The following is the last sentence of the advertisement which notifies the approaching close of the exhibition:—"N.B. Every subscriber of pictures are desired to fetch away their property by Monday, noon, without fail."

In the same year, 1763, that Romney was awarded a bounty for his *Death of General Wolfe*, London was visited for the first time by a young American who was destined to obtain Royal favour and to hold for many years an important position among the artists of England. This was Benjamin West—the son of an Englishman but born in Pennsylvania—who came to England after spending three years studying in Italy.

Long afterwards, in August, 1813, he described to an American friend the manner of his arrival. "Yesterday," he said, "was fifty years since I first came to London. I remember travelling on the top of the Canterbury coach, and stopping about two miles from London at a mean tavern, and taking a dinner before I entered the metropolis to seek my fortune; and I could not avoid yesterday going to the same tavern, calling for a dinner alone in the same room, and looking back on the fifty years I had spent, the progress I had made in my profession, the friends I possessed, and the adventures I had met with." In all those fifty years West never forgot his native Pennsylvania or lost touch with its affairs. When some travellers from that State called upon him in Newman Street in 1816 the old painter told them that although he left Philadelphia in 1760 he retained a perfect recollection of the city and had a fairly good idea of its progress and improvements. He inquired after some of his old acquaintances there; particularly a Mr. Joseph Wharton, who, though blind, still sent him letters signed with his own hand.

Our principal source of information concerning West's youth is the life written by his friend Galt, who mentions that when the artist was a boy in Philadelphia he met a painter named Williams.

Galt says that Williams gave West some advice and lent him a book of artists' biographies, but he appears to have been ignorant of the singular later history of this painter; who, after his two sons had been killed at Bunker Hill, came to England and renewed in London his acquaintanceship with West, to whom he sat for one of the figures in the picture of the battle of La Hogue.

Williams then disappeared, and West heard nothing of him until 1805 when he happened to call upon Mr. Thomas Eagles, the father of the Rev. John Eagles, the art critic. Mr. Eagles was out and West, while awaiting his return, looked over the pages of a book in manuscript that was lying on the table. It was the story of a man who had lived among savages, and ostensibly written by Llewellyn Penrose, but West was amazed to see that the adventures were those of Williams, who had described them to him in Philadelphia. Mr. Eagles afterwards told West that he met Williams, whom he had known always as Penrose, some years before at Bristol. He was ill and almost destitute, and Mr. Eagles befriended him and obtained his admission to the Merchant's Almshouses, where he practised painting for amusement. When the supposed Penrose died he bequeathed to Mr. Eagles his book of adventures; and another book, also in manuscript, of lives of artists, which West recognized as the identical volume Williams had lent to him in Philadelphia, the reading of which, he said, "lighted up a fire in my breast that has never been extinguished." The manuscript book of lives of artists was in 1857 still in the possession of the Rev. John Eagles, who had sold *The Journal of Llewellyn Penrose* many years earlier to Mr. John Murray, by whom it was published in 1815.

There is no reference in Galt's book to the trade or profession of West's father, and Dunlap, the artist's American biographer, is also silent on this point. A modern American writer, that diligent student of the art history of his country, the late C. H. Hart, says in a pamphlet on West published in 1908, that his father "kept for many years a public house of entertainment in Chester County."

On the other hand, Walpole, who comments in a catalogue note of 1764 on West's first appearance as an exhibitor, describes him as "a Pennsylvanian lately arrived, the son by a second wife of a Quaker, by profession a cooper, settled in Oxfordshire, whence he went to Pennsylvania where his son Benjamin was born, who having made great proficiency in drawing was sent to

Italy by a contribution of different persons." But another writer, in an account of West's career published in the *Observer* not long after his election to the Presidentship of the Royal Academy, says that his father kept a hosier's shop in Philadelphia; and further, that the future artist "was apprenticed to an apothecary of that city, where his delineating propensities were originally manifested by his drawing and painting the labels of the pharmacopolist." This may be nonsense, but there is reason to think that West, like other artists who afterwards attained eminence, was not above painting signboards in his youth. In 1832, twelve years after his death, the *Literary Gazette* said:—"We observe in a New York journal that a Bull's Head, one of the earliest productions of West, which has hung there for more than sixty years, has been purchased by an English gentleman."

The three years spent by West in Europe before coming to London in 1763 were passed in studies so zealous that they were not interrupted even by a serious illness which confined him to his bed for six months, and as it culminated in a "tumefied ankle" nearly cost him a leg. The writer of a lengthy biography published in *La Belle Assemblée* in 1808 and apparently based upon information given by the painter, says of this illness:—

"In the severest paroxysms of sickness Mr. West never desisted from drawing, reading, and composing historical subjects. He had a frame constructed in order to enable him to paint when obliged to keep his bed, and in that situation he amused himself by painting several ideal pictures and portraits."

While in Florence he was introduced to many Englishmen of position whose friendship was of value to him subsequently. Arrived in London he commenced at once to work in the St. Martin's Lane Academy, of which he was afterwards appointed a Director; and in the winter of 1763-4 he painted a full-length portrait of General Monckton. The General had been Wolfe's principal lieutenant at the taking of Quebec four years earlier and it was perhaps his conversation that first gave West the idea of painting his most successful picture, *The Death of General Wolfe*, in which Monckton is a prominent figure. At the earnest desire of Joshua Reynolds and Richard Wilson the portrait of General Monckton was sent to the Spring Gardens exhibition in 1764, together with two pictures West had brought with him from Italy, *Angelica and Medoro* and *Cymon and Iphigenia*. The portrait did

not attract much attention, but West's subject pictures pleased the public. Walpole, however, did not care for *Angelica and Medoro* and *Cymon and Iphigenia*. "These," he says, "are much admired but are very tawdry, after the manner of Baroccio."

When West came from Italy in 1763 he was accompanied by William Patoun, whom Galt describes as "a Scottish gentleman of considerable learning and some taste in painting." Very little has been written about Patoun, who was not only a painter but a connoisseur, and in 1773 was engaged "to furnish taste" when Lord Clive travelled on the Continent with the supposed intention of forming a collection of pictures.

Patoun also accompanied Sir Gregory Turner and Richard Paul Jodrell on a similar tour, but while in England he lived at Richmond, where he was the guide in all that concerned painting to a small but fashionable circle of amateurs of art and literature, which included Richard Owen Cambridge, Daniel Wray, and the second Lord Hardwicke. Patoun must have been known to Walpole, for Strawberry Hill is close to Richmond, but he is not mentioned in any of the famous letters, perhaps because his patron, Lord Hardwicke, was Walpole's enemy. Both Walpole and Patoun were at the Academy dinner of 1770. Patoun, who died in 1783, never exhibited, but some of his pictures, notably one of Cleopatra, were highly esteemed by his friends.

CHAPTER TWELVE

"*The American Raphael*"; *West eulogized in verse*; *Amusing sequel*; *The exhibition of 1764*; *An improper picture*; *Hanging pictures at Spring Gardens*; "*Chalk and brickdust*"; *Richard Wilson's remedy*; *West's marriage*; *The mysterious deaths of Mrs. West*; *Hogarth and Churchill's satire*; *Death of Hogarth*; *A charter granted to the Society of Artists*; *Allan Ramsay's abstention*; *Letters from Samuel Scott and Rysbrack*; *Scott's club*; *Sir Edward Walpole and Mrs. Scott*; *William Marlow*; *A Frenchman on London*; *The beauties of Lambeth*; *Monsieur Grosley and English sculpture*; *He sees Garrick's Hogarths*; *Visits the Society of Artists' exhibition of 1765*; *Reynolds and Carlo Vanloo*.

GOOD or bad, West's pictures caused something of a sensation in London in 1764, and when a correspondent of the *Public Advertiser* sent to that journal some verses in French eulogizing the painter, and the editor invited translations from readers, numbers of versions were submitted, including one in Latin, from "A Westminster Scholar." Two or three were printed and it was promised that others should appear, but everything collapsed when another correspondent of the *Public Advertiser* pointed out that the French verses addressed to "Mr. West, a celebrated painter in Castle Street, Leicester Fields, known in Italy by the name of the American Raphael," were not original but had been dedicated to Fontenelle fifty years earlier by the poet De La Motte.

Walpole thought the best pictures at the Society of Artists' exhibition in 1764 were the Reynolds (92) *A Lady, whole length*; Zoffany's portrait group of Foote and Baddeley in *The Mayor of Garratt*; and *A View of Bear Quay*, by Samuel Scott. Mr. Graves says of the Reynolds portrait No. 92, "Probably Duchess of Ancaster," and his conjecture is right, for Walpole states definitely in one of his catalogues that it represents the Duchess. He describes the background as "a view of the Queen's passage—the sea fine," and adds that the sea and ships were by Wright, no doubt Richard Wright the marine painter, who is represented at Hampton Court by a picture, *The Royal Yacht carrying Queen Charlotte to England*. The Duchess of Ancaster was one of the English Peeresses who went to Germany in 1761 to escort to our shores the youthful bride-elect of George the Third.

The bad pictures in 1764 are said to have been very bad, and one of them, laughed at by the critics, shocked the public by its supposed impropriety. Its painter, apparently a forerunner in

taste of the Rev. William Peters, R.A., was William Thompson, of whose picture one writer says:—"His *Jupiter and Leda* few eyes could look upon; it caused Chastity to blush and even Obscenity itself disowned it." Many of the pictures were so feeble that at the close of the exhibition the Directors were reproved for having permitted their admission, "which not only brought shame to the parties themselves but scandalized others also. The Directors indeed, out of their great good nature, took care to hide the disgrace as much as they could by hanging the pictures in the darkest corners of the room, but this gave great offence, and some were very angry that their ignorance was not made more conspicuous."

There is no doubt that the general standard of most of these early exhibitions was deplorably low, a thing we are apt to forget when thinking of the contributions of the handful of good painters which gave them their only distinction. Some light is thrown on their quality by West's description of the arrangement by Richard Wilson and himself of one of the exhibitions at Spring Gardens of the Society of Artists of Great Britain. Washington Allston, the American artist, through whom the account has come down to us, does not mention the year, but it was between 1765 and 1768. He says in a letter quoted by Dunlap:—

"The following characteristic anecdote of Wilson was told me by Mr. West. Before the Royal Academy was formed, the Society of Painters (as I think they were then called) held their annual exhibitions at Spring Gardens. On a certain year Mr. West and Mr. Wilson happened to be appointed joint hangers. It was a memorable year for the crudities of the performances, in consequence, I suppose, of the unusual number of new adventurers. When the pictures were all up Wilson began to rub his eyes as if to clear them of something painful. 'I'll tell you what, West,' he said, 'this will never do. We shall lose the little credit we have, for the public will never stand such a shower of chalk and brickdust.' 'Well,' said West, 'but what is to be done? We can't reject their pictures now.' 'No, but we can mend their manners.' 'What do you mean?' 'You shall see,' said Wilson, 'what Indian ink and Spanish liquorice can do.' He accordingly despatched the porter to the colourman and druggist for these *reformers*, and dissolving them in water, actually washed nearly half the pictures in the exhibition with

this original glaze. 'There!' he said, 'it's as good as asphaltum, with this advantage that if the artists don't like it they can wash it off when they get the pictures home.' And Mr. West acknowledged that they were all the better for it."

The arrival of West, though agreeable to such men as Wilson and Reynolds, was less pleasing to some of the younger English artists who saw a new and possibly dangerous rival in the American, especially as he had been trained in Italy. For Italian training was then as fashionable in England as French training became at a later period, and there was a tendency to depreciate the work of men who believed with Hogarth that foreign travel was unnecessary to the artist. It may be that the publication in 1764 of the following verses was due to the immediate popular approval with which the pictures of the "Italian" West were received.

LINES TO AN ENGLISH PAINTER

Your genius and humour and talents and taste
 Each picture you paint plainly shows,
 But your time you misspend and your colours you waste
 For *an Englishman*, "nobody knows."

Go abroad—take your palette and pencils to Rome,
 And when you return from your tour
 If a few foreign graces and airs you assume
 You will charm a complete connoisseur.

Go abroad then, in Italy study *virtu*,
 No reward *here* your labours will crown;
 Every dauber from Rome is brought forward to view,
 But *an Englishman's* always kept down.

When West came from Italy to England it was with the intention of returning thence to America, but the favourable reception of his work by the public and the entreaties of his friends in London, induced him to remain in this country. He therefore sent for Miss Elizabeth Shewell, of Philadelphia, to whom he had been engaged for some years, and she came to England in the summer of 1764, escorted by West's father and accompanied by a relative, Matthew Pratt. The young painter was married in September, and Pratt, after accompanying the bride and bridegroom on a wedding tour through several English counties, returned with them to London, where, he says:—

"Mr. Benjamin West had a very elegant house, completely fitted up to accommodate a very large family, and where he followed his occupation in great repute, as a Historical and Portrait painter. And where he kindly accommodated me with rooms and rendered me every good and kind office he could bestow on me, as if I was his father, friend and brother."

Pratt, who was a Philadelphia portrait and sign painter, contributed to the exhibition at Spring Gardens in 1766 a still existing portrait group of West and several other of his fellow-countrymen, which he called *The American School*.

Galt gives the date of West's marriage as September, 1765, but Mr. Hart's investigations convinced him that the ceremony took place in 1764, although he was unable to find any record of the marriage at St. Martin's, the church mentioned by Pratt. As to the date Mr. Hart is supported by the writer of the biography in *La Belle Assemblée*, who says that in 1764:—"the amiable lady with whom, previously to his departure from Philadelphia, he had contracted an affection, left that city in company with his father, and joined our young artist in London; they were immediately married." Galt, who gives the wrong date for Mrs. West's marriage, is equally inaccurate about the date of her death, which he gives as December, 1817, instead of December, 1814. Galt's mistake was followed by others, owing to the strange confusion of Mrs. West's name with those of the wives of her son and grandson. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, which gave the date correctly in 1814, announced in 1832 the death of "the widow of Benjamin West Esq., President of the Royal Academy." The *Annual Register* for 1832 made a similar statement, and on October 6th, 1897, the *Daily Chronicle* printed the following among its "Births, Marriages and Deaths":—

"WEST.—On the 2nd of October, at 23 Portsdown Road, Paddington, Catherine, widow of Benjamin West, former President of the Royal Academy."

It has been said that Hogarth's death, which took place in Leicester Fields in October, 1764, was hastened by the worry caused by Churchill's bitter attack on him in the preceding year, but this does not altogether agree with a comment of Dr. Birch's made soon after the appearance of the satirical *Poetical Epistle to Hogarth*. Dr. Birch says in a letter of August, 1763:—"Hogarth has supported the publication of the epistle to him better than he did the apprehension of it, and seemed to me much more in

spirits, when I met him about a fortnight ago, than he had been for some time past."

But he was ailing for a long time before his death. The Rev. William Cole, whose portrait he painted, says in a note written at the close of 1764 that his sister Catherine was much acquainted with the Hogarths, "and used to visit them for a few days at their house in Chiswick, and they used to return it to her at Hackney. I heard her say this summer that she thought he could not go through the winter, being in a very declining way." . . .

The loss of Hogarth deprived England of her most popular artist, for Reynolds in 1764 had not attained to his full stature. Yet, in spite of Hogarth's fame and the universal admiration of his prints, which Le Blanc declared were to be seen in almost every well-furnished house in the kingdom, his death was little noticed in the newspapers of the time. One of them says that he died suddenly, "after being very cheerful at supper," but others merely recorded the event and there was a singular lack of the paragraphs of gossip and reminiscence such as followed the deaths of Reynolds and Gainsborough. However, in the middle of December the *Whitehall Evening Post* published a memoir of the artist from which perhaps Walpole obtained the information that he afterwards admitted was incorrect, that Hogarth was apprenticed to "a mean engraver of arms on plate." In the *Whitehall Evening Post* the description is "an engraver of pewter pots," but the truth is that Hogarth's employer, Ellis Gamble, was a man of good standing in the silversmith's trade.

Hogarth, as we have seen, contributed to one exhibition of the Society of Artists of Great Britain, and drew two illustrations for its catalogue, but he seems to have taken no part in the negotiations that led to the granting of a charter to the Society. The proposal to apply for a charter was made at a general meeting held early in 1764 and it was granted on January 26th, 1765. George Lambert was named in it as the first President of what was henceforth to be known as the Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain; Francis Hayman as Vice-President; Richard Dalton as Treasurer; and Francis Milner Newton as Secretary. The twenty Directors appointed by the Charter included Richard Wilson, Francis Cotes, Paul Sandby, James McArdell, George Michael Moser, Jeremiah Meyer, and James Paine—but not Joshua Reynolds. The name of Reynolds had been included originally by the votes of the Society, but he

refused to allow it to be inserted in the Charter and that of George Barret was put in its place.

For some reason, of which we are ignorant, Allan Ramsay did not join the Society, and in 1764 Walpole remarks with surprise that "Ramsay has never sent a single picture into any of the exhibitions." In another note, written in one of his catalogues, Walpole gives a curious anecdote about this artist and his portraits. He says that at a certain period Ramsay painted scarcely anyone but the King and Queen and Lord Bute (the most unpopular Prime Minister of the eighteenth century) and that Sterne once said to him:—"Mr. Ramsay—you only paint Court cards, the King, Queen and Knave." Lord Bute admired Ramsay and helped to obtain for him that Royal patronage which brought him not only popular reputation but a great amount of money. Ramsay probably had what seemed to him good reasons for declining to join or exhibit with the Society of Artists of Great Britain, which was a private body with no official standing, but it is extraordinary that he was not appointed a member of the Royal Academy when it was founded in 1768. The Academy was the King's own Society and he was the King's favourite painter, and although not of the highest rank in his profession a far abler man than many of the original Forty. Moreover, Ramsay was a man much liked and as far as we know on good terms with all his brother artists; except Robert Strange the engraver, and possibly Zoffany. Strange detested Ramsay and in a letter speaks of his countryman as "that scounderal," to use his own spelling; and when Zoffany first began to attract the King's notice there were rumours in the newspapers of a violent quarrel at the Palace between "Mr. R." and "Mr. Z."

But these were rumours and possibly baseless. In any case the animosity, whether of Strange or Zoffany, could have had no bearing upon the exclusion of Ramsay from the newly founded Royal Academy. Zoffany was not himself a foundation member of that body, and Strange was one of its most pronounced opponents. Allan Cunningham, in a surprising paragraph in his life of Ramsay, describes him as "an ornament to the Royal Academy," and, ignoring Gainsborough, says that as a portrait painter at the Academy he was second only to Reynolds! Ramsay was never a member of the Academy or a contributor to its exhibitions, and had no connection with the institution beyond figuring occasionally as a guest at its banquets.

THE INCORPORATED ARTISTS

Allan Ramsay, although he never exhibited, and took no part in the proceedings of the rival bodies of painters, was interested in the Society of Arts. An entry in the minutes of the Society in 1759 records that Ramsay acted as chairman to the committee that judged the landscape drawings submitted for prizes in that year. McArdell the engraver was on the committee, whose members also included a "Mr. Wilson," who may have been Benjamin Wilson. It is unlikely that the member was Richard Wilson, as one of his pupils, Johnson Carr, then a youth of sixteen, was a competitor and gained a prize. Carr was called upon to bring evidence that he had executed the drawing unaided, and this he did at a meeting of the committee held a week later. His witness, another youth of about the same age, was Ozias Humphry.

The Society of Incorporated Artists of Great Britain soon lost its President. George Lambert the landscape painter, who by the terms of the Charter had been appointed to that position on the 26th of January, 1765, died a few days later, and on February the 7th at a meeting held at the Turk's Head, Francis Hayman, the Vice-President, was chosen to fill the vacancy. At the same meeting Edward Penny was elected Vice-President and George Stubbs a Director. In March a general meeting of the Society was held, at which the Charter was read and sixty-seven artists signed the roll and were admitted as Fellows, among them Gainsborough who had come up from Bath for that purpose. Two of the older Fellows, Michael Rysbrach the sculptor and Samuel Scott the marine painter, were prevented from attending the meeting by ill health and sent letters of excuse. Rysbrach's note is interesting as showing how much the Flemish sculptor had improved in his English since he wrote to Dr. Macro the grotesquely spelt letter quoted in Chapter Five. The note to the Secretary of the Incorporated Society of Artists might well have been written by an Englishman:—

"Vere Street, Oxford Chapel,
March 11, 1765.

SIR

I am so ill that I am advised not to go out at all at Night, being in a very bad state of health; therefore am sorry it is nott in my power to wait on Mr. Dalton the Treasurer, and Mr. Hayman the President, and the rest of the Gentlemen heartily to wish them joy of having the honour of the Royal Charter

granted to them, and Desire that you will please acquaint them therewith.

I am, Sir
Your most humble servant

MICH: RYSBRACH.

To Mr. Newton, Secretary to the Society of Artists of Great Britain, at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street."

Rysbrach, a man "of a middle stature, fleshy but not fat," had by this time become dropsical and unwieldy, and could with difficulty hold up his head. But he lived until 1770 and, industrious always, amused himself by making pen-drawings washed with bistre even when he could hardly rise from his chair.

The letter from the other invalid, written from Twickenham, where he had been a neighbour of Walpole for many years, was much more familiar:—

"DEAR NEWTON,

I received yours of the 5th inst. and am much obliged to the Gentlemen for the favour they doe me, and should with the greatest pleasure wait on them at the Turk's Head on Monday, but am so very bad with the Gout that I can't get from one Room to another without help.

I am, dear Sir, yours most sincerely

SAML. SCOTT.

Pray my sincere respects to all friends. *March 7, 1765.*"

Scott was well acquainted with Hogarth and accompanied him and three other friends on the famous four-day excursion from Billingsgate to Rochester and back, of which Forrest, one of the party, wrote the history. As we know from Vertue, Scott was only about five feet in height, and in Hogarth's illustrations to Forrest's account he is represented as smaller than any of the others with the exception of Hogarth himself. Daniel Wray, who called on him on behalf of Lord Royston, also remarks on his size. "A commission," he says, "that sends me to Scott is always an agreeable one, the little man is so attached to his art and so constantly improving in it." Scott is said to have been born in 1710, and if so can have been only twenty-one or twenty-two when he collaborated with Lambert in painting for the East India Company six pictures of their principal ports and settlements. Lambert painted the forts and the landscape and Scott the ship-

ping, and the pictures were hung in the Company's house in Leadenhall Street in 1732.

He must too have entered into matrimony at an early age as in the account of the excursion to Rochester (which was also in 1732) his wife is mentioned, and in terms which suggest that he was very fond of her. Mrs. Scott, "a smart witty woman," was the only female member of a little club, composed of her husband's intimates, that held its meetings at his house when he lived in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. The members comprised, in addition to Scott and his wife: Sir Edward Walpole (chairman); Bendall Martin, Secretary to the Board of Excise, who lodged with Scott; Captain Marcellus Laroon (deputy chairman); James Deacon the miniature painter; and a Mr. Mann, who was perhaps the John Mann of the Custom House, mentioned by Horace Walpole as "in my brother's and my office."

Sir Edward Walpole, who was the grandfather of the three Ladies Waldegrave painted by Reynolds, was long the close friend of the Scotts and owned some of the largest and most important of the painter's works. He was an open admirer of Mrs. Scott, to whom, perhaps for the amusement of "the club," he sent a long, unsigned, epistle in which were set forth the many advantages that would accrue to her by getting rid of her husband and marrying her supposed anonymous correspondent. It afterwards came into the possession of Horace Walpole, by whom it was preserved among his papers with the endorsement:—"An excellent letter written in a feigned character by my brother Sir Edward Walpole to Mrs. Scott, wife of Sam. Scott, sea-piece painter, and given to me by her."

Judging by the number of works credited to him Scott's production must have been very large, but in 1765, when he was incapacitated by gout, he appears to have been in want of patronage; as the *View of Bear Quay* which Walpole praised so highly at the exhibition of the preceding year was included in the sale by Langford, in April, 1765, of "The pictures of Mr. Samuel Scott, Painter, who is retiring into the country." Little is known of Scott's life or movements, but it is probable that the place of his retirement was Bath, from whence he sent *A View of the Tower of London* to the Royal Academy in 1771. It may have been this picture of the Tower of London that he endeavoured to dispose of in Bath in the spring of 1772 by means of a lottery at two guineas a ticket. Scott died at Bath, in Walcot Street, later in the

same year, and his effects, sold not long afterwards, included several views of Bath and many of Ludlow. He owned pictures and sketches by Canaletto, whose influence can be traced in some of the figures in Scott's very large picture of the Tower and London Bridge in the collection of Lord Malmesbury.

Walpole had an extravagantly high opinion of Scott's powers, and acclaimed him as being, within his range, "not only the first painter of his age, but one whose works will charm in every age." Walpole admired too the work of Scott's pupil, William Marlow, who also lived for many years at Twickenham, in a house opposite the church and close to Strawberry Hill. In a letter to Sir Horace Mann, then in Florence, Walpole mentions two pictures of Verona which had just been sold, as by Canaletto, for 550 guineas. "It is since come out," he says, "that they are copies by Marlow, a disciple of Scott. Both master and scholar are indeed better painters than the Venetian."

William Marlow was a Londoner, born in 1740 in the parish of St. Saviour, Southwark, the parish in which a more famous landscape painter, Thomas Girtin, first saw the light. After studying under Scott he travelled for several years in Italy, and brought back a great number of studies of landscape and buildings from which he composed pictures. He resided at first in Leicester Fields, and there made the acquaintance of Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose friendship he long enjoyed. Marlow appears to have been always in comfortable circumstances and to have painted only for his own pleasure after he reached middle age. In 1785 the Duke of Rutland, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, wanted him to go to that country to paint landscapes, and Sir Joshua approached him on the Duke's behalf, only to learn that he had "quitted business." Never a candidate for official honours at the Royal Academy, Marlow was a faithful supporter of the rival Incorporated Society of Artists, to whose exhibitions he contributed no fewer than a hundred and twenty-five paintings and drawings. To the Academy he sent twenty-five in all, the last in 1807, six years before his death. He was elected Vice-President of the Society of Artists in 1778. Marlow had only one pupil, John Curtis of Twickenham, who exhibited at the Academy until 1822. The writer of an obituary of Marlow, published in a London newspaper a few days after his death, says that he executed the designs for the seals of the original thirteen United States.

In the same year, 1765, that the Society of Artists received its

charter, England was visited by an observant Frenchman named Grosley whose comments on London, and its painters and sculptors are not without value. Grosley was unacquainted with our language, but as he knew many people here and was a friend of Garrick he had opportunities for studying the social, artistic and dramatic life of the metropolis of which he took full advantage. He landed at Dover and dreaded, as most foreigners did who came to England in the eighteenth century, that he should be attacked by highwaymen while on the way to London. The same fears were felt years afterwards by Madame Vigée Le Brun the portrait painter, who, after travelling safely over the same road, confessed that she hid her diamonds in her stockings before leaving Dover. Grosley was as fortunate as his famous countrywoman, for he saw none of the knights of the black mask except such as he passed from time to time hanging from gibbets at the cross-roads. "There they dangled," he says, "dressed from head to foot, and with wigs upon their heads."

His first impression of London was favourable. "I arrived towards the close of day. Though the sun was still above the horizon the lamps were already lighted on Westminster Bridge and upon the roads and streets that lead to it. These streets are broad, regular, and lined with high houses, forming the most beautiful district of London." The charm of Westminster was enhanced for Grosley by the beauty of the opposite bank of the Thames (now the industrial quarter of Lambeth), which he described in 1765 as open country dotted with numerous pleasure houses and agreeable gardens. The visitor was soon at his ease in the metropolis as he was lucky enough to find lodgings near Leicester Fields with a family all of whose members, even the children, spoke French and English with equal fluency. From this convenient centre he set forth from day to day to study London, with whose architecture upon a closer acquaintance he was less impressed than he was with the London shops. Of these he speaks in high praise in spite of the incongruities of their external decoration, and the too elaborate ornament of their signs.

"The shops in the Strand, Fleet Street, Cheapside, etc., are the most striking objects that London can offer to the eye of a stranger. They are all enclosed with great glass doors; all adorned on the outside with pieces of ancient architecture which are the more absurd as they are liable to be spoilt by constant use; all brilliant and gay as well on account of the

things sold in them as the exact order in which they are kept, so that they make a most splendid show, greatly superior to anything of the kind in Paris. At the mercer's shops the columns are covered with rich stuffs which are continually spattered from top to bottom with the dirt of the street."

Of the filthy condition of the London thoroughfares Grosley makes grave complaint. He declares that during the whole period of his residence, the best part of the Strand, near St. Clement's Church, was constantly foul with a dirty puddle three or four inches deep; a puddle whose splashings covered those who walked on foot, filled coaches when their windows happened to be down, and bedaubed all the lower parts of the adjacent houses. The English were not afraid of it, defended as they were by their brown wigs, their black stockings and their blue surtouts made in the form of nightgowns; but on account of the constant bespattering of mud by the wheels of passing vehicles the most exclusive shops were situated in the narrow ways between the Strand and Holborn. He says:—

"They are scattered up and down in these courts and passages. The grand company which they draw together, the elegant arrangement and parade made by the shops, whether in stuffs exposed for sale, fine furniture and things of taste, or the girls belonging to them, would be motives sufficient to determine those that walk to make that their way in preference to any other, even if they had not neatness and security to recommend them."

After the clear air of Paris even the summer atmosphere of London seemed dingy to the Frenchman, who declares that a smoky cloud wrapped the city like a mantle and had already given St. Paul's the appearance of being built with coal rather than with stone. The cleanest things that he notices are some of the public monuments, the statues of George the First and George the Second which adorn the squares in the new quarters of the town:—"being cast in yellow copper they have nothing remarkable about them but their lustre; they are doubtless kept in repair, polished and rubbed with as much care as the large knockers on gentlemen's doors, which are of the same sort of metal."

Neither our public monuments nor the current work of English sculptors appealed much to the Frenchman, accustomed as he was to the higher standard of Paris. He went to the studio of Joseph Wilton (afterwards Keeper of the Royal Academy) and

saw there in progress a statue of the elder Pitt for Cork, and the well-known monument to Wolfe that is now in Westminster Abbey. At Moore's studio he was shown a statue recently commenced of William Beckford, the ex-Lord Mayor, who was the friend and supporter of Wilkes and the father of the author of *Vathek*. Grosley was surprised, as well he might be, to hear that the statue had been ordered by Beckford himself and that it was to be made at his expense. Moore showed him another work in progress for the same millionaire client, a chimney-piece in white marble for Beckford's country house. Its decoration was curious; no less than an illustration of all the more remarkable deaths mentioned in the *Iliad*, those of the inferior personages slightly indicated and those of the more important in relief so high that they almost started from the marble. For this work the sculptor had already received on account from Beckford the sum of three hundred guineas.

At the house of Garrick, who owned the four pictures by Hogarth, entitled *The Election*, Grosley made his first acquaintance with the paintings of the master whose engravings were already familiar to him. He says of the Hogarths:—

“These pictures are in the taste of Old Brueghel; we see in them Nature herself in action in the several scenes exhibited; at taverns, fairs and markets, which the English theatre represents most faithfully. It is pure nature but nature too naked and too true; a truth very different from that displayed by two of the masters of the present French school, Messieurs Chardin and Greuze. Hogarth has painted a great deal; England is filled with prints from his drawings and they are sold at a high price.”

Grosley goes to the exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists held at Spring Gardens in 1765, an exhibition which Walpole thought was the best that had been seen up to that time, and admires the full length by Reynolds of Lady Sarah Bunbury, painted as *A Lady sacrificing to the Graces*. He praises highly too, a portrait by an unnamed painter which he says was placed in a corner of the room, in an old frame, and adds, “If I had a fancy to have my picture drawn perhaps I should have chosen the artist who executed this portrait.” The landscapes attract him at Spring Gardens and to his mind confirm the judgment of Rouquet that in this branch the English painters are particularly successful. “Few masters,” Grosley declares, “surpass the English

landscape painters; they are at present in the highest esteem." But he mentions none of their names nor does he refer to Gainsborough, or indeed to any of the artists who were exhibiting at Spring Gardens, with the exception of Reynolds and of Hayman, whose best work, however, he thinks is to be seen in the Rotunda at Vauxhall. "The place which these pictures were to occupy and the subjects which they represent, have had upon the imagination and pencil of the artist all the effect they ought to have; he has surpassed himself in these four pictures, and the three pieces of his which I have seen in the Exhibition can by no means come into competition with them."

Grosley, in speaking of the private collections of Old Masters, says of the wealthier English, that "a taste for pictures makes an article of their luxury; they sacrifice to this taste in proportion to their fortune." He thinks that they are often duped by the dealers and that their collections contain a multitude of copies many of which were bought by them as originals. Curiously enough only a few months before Grosley came to England the eminent French painter, Carlo Vanloo, had shown that foreign experts were no less liable than our own collectors to mistake copies for originals. Vanloo visited London in the autumn of 1764 for the purpose of seeing the private collections in England, and in November he made the acquaintance of Sir Joshua. William Seward refers to the meeting of the two artists in the following note, written not long after the death of Reynolds.

"Sir Joshua used to say that a President of the Academy of Painting in a neighbouring country paid him a visit, and that he showed him his foreign pictures, to the originality of many of which he made objections. At last, coming to a copy of a female Satyr, made by Sir Joshua after Rubens, he cried out — 'This is an original, I see the squirt of Rubens's pencil.' Sir Joshua had the good nature and the good manners not to undeceive the pretended connoisseur."

Northcote, who told the story again many years afterwards in his life of Reynolds, says that the picture by Sir Joshua which deceived Vanloo was a copy of an old woman's head by Rembrandt.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Art criticism in 1766; Pamphlets on the exhibitions; "An Impartial Hand"; Stubbs and Nature in rivalry; Mrs. Grace; Copley's first exhibited work; Reynolds admires it; "A very wonderful performance"; Copley elected a Fellow of the Incorporated Society of Artists; His letter of acknowledgment; Intense rivalry of the Incorporated Artists and the Free Society; Artists' "Ghosts" of the period; Cotes, Hayman, Hudson and Lambert helped in their work; Matthew Pratt of Philadelphia honoured by the Incorporated Society; Benjamin West the fashion; He dances a minuet in Hyde Park; Dissensions in the Incorporated Society; The exhibition of 1767; Nothing from Reynolds; Alleged selfishness of Cotes; "You must not hang that picture there!"; The exhibition for the King of Denmark; Tickets in demand; Chambers accused of obtaining them unfairly; Joshua Kirby elected President of the Incorporated Society; The plan for a Royal Academy; Death of Kirby's son.

DURING the spring of 1766 modern painters and modern pictures were more discussed in the Press than they had been in any year since exhibitions were first organized. Taylor and Leslie, in their life of Reynolds, say that critical pamphlets on the exhibitions did not appear until 1780, and that before that time newspaper notices of galleries were of the most perfunctory and jejune nature. But a critical pamphlet on the exhibition at the Society of Arts was published as early as 1762, and the Royal Academy exhibitions were reviewed in the newspapers systematically, and sometimes at considerable length, from 1773 onwards. It must be admitted that before that year the newspaper criticisms, though occasionally far from perfunctory, were irregular and spasmodic in their appearance. In some years the London journals showed their interest in exhibitions by printing reviews of the pictures and inviting correspondence about them from their readers, and in others they neglected the arts altogether. For instance, the first exhibition of the Royal Academy held in 1769, although under the direct patronage of the King, was almost disregarded by the Press.

But in 1766 the newspapers said a good deal about the pictures shown by the Incorporated Society at Spring Gardens, which perhaps were better than usual, as Walpole describes them as "a good collection." Two critical pamphlets upon them were published, the first of which to appear was *The Exhibition, or a Candid Display of the Genius and Merits of the several Masters whose Works are now offered to the Public at Spring Gardens*. This was in verse

and claimed to have been written by "An Impartial Hand." Unfortunately the hand was anything but impartial, for in this pamphlet the greater painters were almost ignored. The writer commences by saying that before he ascended the stairs to see the exhibition of works by living artists at Spring Gardens:—

"Sly Malice pluck'd my sleeve and did assure
That most above were Modern, Mean and Poor
But *West* and *Genius* met me at the Door;
Virgilian West, who hides his happy Art
And steals, through Nature's inlets, to the Heart,
Pathetic, Simple, Pure, through every part."

West was one of the idols of "An Impartial Hand," who prefaces several pages of fulsome flattery of the young American by the following greeting:—

"Thou long expected, wish'd for Stranger, hail!
In Britain's bosom make thy loved Abode
And open daily to her raptured Eye
The mystic wonders of thy Raphael's school."

George Stubbs is praised, more justly but with equal extravagance and with a touch of unintentional humour. His portraits, landscapes and animals are all complimented:—

"The wide Creation waits upon his call,
He paints each species and excels in all
Whilst wondering Nature asks with jealous tone,
Which Stubbs's labours are and which her own?"

Nature is also eclipsed by another artist. "See Cotes in Crayons snatch the Palm from Life," says the reviewer, who then acclaims the master of Sir Joshua:—

"Hudson, his art may well Display to Sight,
Who gave Mankind a Reynolds and a Wright."

But Hudson's great pupil, and Gainsborough, that pupil's only rival, are allotted but a line each:—

"There Gainsborough shines, much honoured name,
There veteran Reynolds, worthy of his fame."

The appearance of the two pamphlets on the exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists was not viewed with favour by the

A CRITIC AT SPRING GARDENS

newspaper critics of 1766. In particular the second of these publications, *A Critical Review of the Pictures, etc., exhibited at the Great Room, Spring Gardens*, was condemned by the gentleman who, above the pseudonym of "Smirk," wrote frequently for the *Public Advertiser*, one of the most widely circulated journals of the day. Newspaper art criticism was then a young and struggling industry, but the rivalries of its few professors were already acute, and they were fortunate in enjoying a freedom of expression when writing about one another that is denied to the journalist of the present day. "Smirk," who seems to have thought that the pamphleteer was encroaching on his preserves, says of *A Critical Review*:—"I have read it through with an attention it only deserves from a determination to reprehend a miserable wretch devoid of any requisite to perform a task equal to the most refined pen, the clearest head and the best heart. Indeed I must confess that a contemptuous silence would have been the best castigation for so dull a creature."

"Smirk" took a gloomy view not only of the capacities of his fellow-critics but of the general standard of the appreciation of art in England. After writing his first review of Spring Gardens, in which he treats Gainsborough with singular unkindness and suggests that he is an epileptic, he pays another visit to the exhibition to look again at the fine portrait by Reynolds of James Paine the architect, and his son. "At length," he says, "I sat me down opposite the picture, and whilst musing in admiration at all its excellencies, a gentleman came close up to me and said to his friend at his elbow:—'There's for you! Is not that Lady vastly fine?' 'Good God,' said his friend, 'how natural the shadows on the table.' 'Well, I think this is one of the finest things here—stay. Let me see what the number is. Oh, No. 55.'" The two gentlemen did not even glance at the Reynolds and it filled the critic with a sense of despair that they could be enchanted with such a picture as No. 55, "while one of the best portraits by the greatest man we have, escaped their notice."

No. 55, *A Young Lady Leaning on a Table*, was probably a poor thing, as "Smirk" suggests, though one of his fellow-critics had noticed it by mistake as the work of Gainsborough. It was painted by Mrs. Grace, an artist whose work is forgotten, although in her time she enjoyed more patronage than many whose names are still remembered. Mrs. Grace, who was a self-taught artist, painted portraits in oil as well as subject pictures,

and her studio was for many years in Shorter's Court, Throgmorton Street. Subsequently she retired to Homerton, where she built a gallery in which to show her pictures. Mrs. Grace, it is said, left a fortune of more than £20,000, all gained by her work as an artist.

It is due to the "Impartial Hand" from whose versified review of the Incorporated Society's exhibition I have quoted, to say that he noticed the merit of Copley's picture *A Boy with a Flying Squirrel* and predicted the future success of its author by describing him as "a young Laurel that shall reach the Skies." Copley's work was also praised in the *London Chronicle* by another writer, who said of it:—"Very clever. I am told this is the performance of a young artist, if so, with proper application there is no doubt of his making a good painter. The shadow of the flesh is rather too dark." A romantic story of this picture, Copley's first exhibited work, has frequently been told; how the young artist painted it at Boston in circumstances of considerable difficulty and sent it to the London exhibition, where it arrived unlabelled and was identified as a transatlantic work by Benjamin West, who recognized as American the squirrel and the wood of the stretcher on which the canvas was strained. Much of this is unfounded, and another statement, that Copley sent his picture addressed to Benjamin West with a request that he would place it in the exhibition, is altogether incorrect.

The true story of *A Boy with a Flying Squirrel* is told in one of the letters contained in the two parcels of the Copley-Pelham family papers at the Public Record Office. How these parcels reached their present situation no one has been able to discover, not even Professor Guernsey Jones, who made a special study of the Copley papers and transcribed many of them for one of the publications of the Massachusetts Historical Society. If, however, we may assume that they were once in the possession of John Singleton Copley and were inherited by his son, it may be that their presence at the Public Record Office has some connection with the fact that the younger Copley was Master of the Rolls in 1827, and in that capacity was custodian of part of the national records. In his time the Master of the Rolls occupied an official residence in Chancery Lane, on the site of the present Public Record Office, and it is not beyond the bounds of probability that some of his private papers were placed accidentally among the State documents and have remained there ever since.

Most of the Copley-Pelham papers, which are very numerous, are connected with the social and political life of the American colonies before the Declaration of Independence. Only a few of them touch upon the arts in England, but these are letters of considerable interest. From them we learn that Copley in the autumn of 1765, with mingled hopes and fears, entrusted *A Boy with a Flying Squirrel* to the care of a merchant sea-captain named Bruce, who appears to have been a man of unusual sense and discretion. Bruce conveyed the picture from Boston to London, where he showed it to Lord Cardross, that friend of literature and men of letters who is better known as Lord Buchan, and it was by him brought to the notice of Reynolds. It was exhibited at Spring Gardens in April and May, 1766, but it is probable that the anxious painter knew nothing of its fate until the autumn, as Bruce's letter, in which he tells Copley the story of the picture's success, was not written until August. Bruce, writing on the 4th of that month, says:—

“Don't imagine I have forgot or neglected your interest by my long silence. I have delayed writing to you ever since the Exhibition in order to forward the enclosed letter from Mr. West, which he has from time to time promised me, but which his extreme application to his art has hitherto prevented his finishing.

“What he says will be much more conclusive to you than anything from me. I have only to add the general opinions which were pronounced on your picture when it was exhibited. It was universally allowed to be the best picture of its kind that appeared on that occasion, but the sentiments of Mr. Reynolds will, I suppose, weigh more with you than those of other critics. He says of it, ‘That in any collection of paintings it will pass for an excellent picture, but considering the disadvantages you had laboured under that *it was a very wonderful performance.*’ ‘That it exceeded any portrait that Mr. West ever drew.’ ‘That he did not know one painter at home who had all the advantages that Europe could give him that could equal it, and that if you are capable of producing such a piece by the mere efforts of your own genius; with the advantages of the example and instruction which you could have in Europe you would be a valuable acquisition to the art and one of the first painters in the world, provided you could receive these aids before it was too late in life and before your manner and taste

were corrupted or fixed by working in your own little way at Boston.' He condemns your working either in crayons or water colours.

"Don't imagine I flatter you. I only repeat Mr. Reynolds's words, which are confirmed by the public voice. He, indeed, is a mere enthusiast when he speaks of you. At the same time he found faults. He observed a little hardness in the drawing, coldness in the shades, an over minuteness, all which an example would correct. 'But still,' he added, '*it's a wonderful picture* to be sent by a young man who was never out of New England and had only some bad copies to study.'

"I have begged of Mr. West to be copious in his criticisms and advices to you. Mr. Reynolds would also have wrote to you himself but his time is too valuable. The picture is at his house where I shall leave it till I have your directions how to dispose of it. I could sell it to advantage, but it is thought more for your interest to keep it as a specimen. You are greatly obliged to Lord Cardross, a friend of mine, to whom I first sent it. He showed it to the most eminent connoisseurs, then gave it to Mr. Reynolds, who sent it with his own pictures to the Exhibition. You are the best judge of your own affairs and whether you can with propriety accomplish a trip for a few years to Europe. Should you take that resolution I believe I may venture to assure you that you will meet with much encouragement and patronage. Should it be in my power to be of the least use to you, you may command me to the utmost. I am already very happy in having contributed to make your merit so far known to the world and hope it has laid the foundation of your being the great man Mr. Reynolds prognosticates. . . . I had almost forgot to tell you that in case you don't appear yourself the friends of your art wish that you will paint another picture to exhibit next year, and Mr. West has promised to point out a subject to you. Should you do so, send it to Mr. West, who seems sincerely disposed to be your friend. Mr. Reynolds is too busy and too great a man to be active for you, though he is also much disposed to serve you."

Copley's picture was a surprising achievement for a young artist who, according to his son, Lord Lyndhurst, "never saw a decent picture until he was nearly thirty years of age" and certainly had little to guide him except his own natural taste.

Boston at this time was too young and undeveloped to appreciate properly the art of painting, and in one of his letters Copley describes himself as "peculiarly unlucky in living in a place into which there has not been one portrait brought within my memory that is worthy to be called a picture." He says in another letter from Boston:—"A taste for painting is too much wanting to afford any kind of help; and was it not for preserving the resemblance of particular persons, painting would not be known in the place. The people generally regard it as no more than any other useful trade, as they sometimes term it, like that of a carpenter, tailor, or shoemaker; not as one of the noblest arts in the world, which is not a little mortifying to me." Nevertheless, commissions were not lacking in Boston, and Copley admits in the same letter that they brought him in about three hundred guineas a year and had enabled him to save sufficient to visit Europe and to support himself while studying there for two or three years.

West kept his promise to Captain Bruce and wrote Copley a long letter of advice and criticism, in the course of which he mentions that the unlabelled picture *A Boy with a Flying Squirrel* was at first thought to be the work of Joseph Wright of Derby, then a rising young artist whose picture of *The Orrery* caused some stir at the exhibition of 1766. In this letter West says, after some complimentary remarks to Copley:—

"Your picture first fell into Mr. Reynolds's hands to have it put into the exhibition as the performance of a young American; he was greatly struck with the piece, and it was first concluded to have been painted by one Mr. Wright, a young man that has just made his appearance in the art in a surprising degree of merit. As your name was not given with the picture it was concluded a mistake, but before the Exhibition opened the particulars were received from Captain Bruce."

The Directors of the Incorporated Society of Artists were so much impressed by Copley's first exhibited picture that although he was personally unknown to any of them he was proposed as a Fellow by Hayman and West, and elected in September, 1766. Copley's letter to the Secretary acknowledging the honour, now in the archives of the Royal Academy and quoted on the following page, differs slightly from another version at the Record Office, which has more mistakes in spelling and is perhaps the original draft.

"BOSTON, *November 23rd*, 1767.

SIR

I received your very polite letter of the 3rd of September, 1766, which gave me the first notice of my being elected a Fellow of the Society of Artists of Great Britain; tho' by some accident it did not come to hand until the 13th of October, 1767, otherwise I should sooner have acknowledged the scense I have of the compliment they have been pleased to honour me with.

I beg, Sir, you will take the first opportunity of making my acknowledgements to the President and Society for this testimony of their approbation, and the favourable reception they have given my works, and as I shall always esteem it a real Honour to be of that Society, so I shall by constant application to my studys strive to deserve the Election. But as I am sensible the honour of the Society depends on the promotion of the Arts I cannot but reflect with concern on my present situation which utterly deprives me of every opportunity (but what Nature has furnished me with) of being aiding in this laudable work.

In a country where there is neither precept, examples nor models to form the taste and to direct and confirm the practice, I cannot enjoy the satisfaction or procure the advantage I should enjoy in obeying your summons. But the tie of Filial Duty pleads my excuse for what might be otherwise thought to arise from inactivity.

I am, Sir,
With all due Respect
Your most Obedient and Humble Servant
JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY."

Until this letter reached London the Incorporated Society was ignorant of the full name of its new Fellow. Captain Bruce by some oversight described him as "William Copley" when he conveyed the first picture to the exhibition and this is the name given to him in the catalogues of 1766 and 1767.

Some correspondence published in the newspapers of 1766 shows that there was considerable rivalry between the two bodies of artists then existing, in spite of the pretended contempt of the Incorporated Society for the Free Artists and their exhibition in Maiden Lane. One writer, "Crito," who defends the Free Artists,

says that he went first to the Incorporated Society's exhibition at Spring Gardens; and although admitting the superiority of Reynolds and the "great merit" of Gainsborough, thought that numbers of the pictures on the walls had no attraction beyond the gaudiness of their frames. He hints that the Incorporated Artists were jealous of their Free brethren and says that just before leaving Spring Gardens he mentioned to a friend that he was going on to Maiden Lane. But he was overheard by some gentlemen present, "evidently painters," who begged him not to waste his time in this errand as "there was not a single picture worth sixpence in the whole exhibition of the Free Artists." Nevertheless, "Crito" went to Maiden Lane and was not disappointed, although the contributors to the exhibition included many amateurs. It had been asserted that a picture shown as his own work by one of these amateurs had been touched upon and improved by an abler hand; and another correspondent "T.B.," in defending the amateur declared that the practice was common among the painters of the time. "T.B." shows incidentally that Hudson was as dependent upon his drapery men in 1766 as he was in the days of Vanaken.

"It is," he says, "extremely customary to employ some brother artists to finish particular parts of their performances. Mr. Lambert, for instance, never painted the figures in his own landscapes; Mr. Hayman's backgrounds have frequently been executed by a variety of hands; and it is well known that Mr. Hudson, Mr. Cotes and several other painters of the first reputation seldom, if ever, finish an atom more than the face of their portraits, notwithstanding that the drapery of their pictures—which is generally the production of indigent excellence—acquired them such uncommon approbation from the public."

The election of Copley by the Incorporated Society in 1766 was followed by another compliment to American art in 1767, when an honorary membership was bestowed upon West's friend, Matthew Pratt of Philadelphia. In this year West himself was more prominent than ever at the exhibition and the ecstatic appreciation of his work by the "Impartial Hand" in 1766 was followed by newspaper compliments no less extravagant in the succeeding year. The writer of a lengthy notice of the exhibition in the *Public Advertiser* reserved most of his praise for West, making no comment on the absence for the first time of any con-

tribution from Reynolds; and ignoring Gainsborough, who showed full-length portraits of Lady Grosvenor, the Duke of Argyll and Mr. Vernon, as well as a landscape with figures. West in 1767 appears to have been the popular idol and was regarded by some as the probable founder of a school in England that might rival or excel those of Italy. He is described by another writer as "an artist who has already reached the pinnacle of fame and promises very fair to become another Raphael."

It is true that Walpole was not impressed by the successes of the Pennsylvanian artist, for he described West's *Jupiter and Europa* of 1765 as "abominably bad" and says that all his pictures of the following year were hard and gaudy and had little expression. But West had now secured the support of the King and the munificent Royal patronage that was to be continued for more than thirty years, circumstances that largely increased his importance in the eyes of the public by whom all his movements were followed with interest. West was among other things a most accomplished skater, and a contemporary paragraph gives an amusing sketch of the performances on the Serpentine of the future President of the Royal Academy. "There never was a more brilliant exhibition than Hyde Park afforded on Sunday—Ministers, Lords, Commons, all on the ice. Of the Commons Mr. West the celebrated painter, and Dr. Hewitt were the best. They danced a minuet on their skates, to the admiration of the spectators."

West was one of the hangers at the exhibition of 1767 and, as he had promised, looked after the interests of Copley, whose *Portrait of a Young Lady* was assigned a good place at Spring Gardens, and was admired for its technical qualities though no one had a good word for it in other respects. Copley's faithful friend, Captain Bruce, tells the artist in a letter of June 11th, 1767, that his picture arrived from Boston just in time for the exhibition and that in the opinion of the London artists its execution is superior to that of *A Boy with a Flying Squirrel*. Apparently Copley's sitter was a lady of exceptional plainness as Bruce tells him that his subject is "so disagreeable a character," that his work was liked only by those who could appreciate the excellence of the painting.

"I waited," says Bruce, "on Mr. Reynolds, on purpose to get his opinion, as of more consequence than all the rest. He exclaimed against the subject but approved the painting, and perseveres in his opinion that you only want example to be one

of the best painters in the world. He dislikes your shades, he says they want life and transparency. He says 'your drawing is wonderfully correct, but that a something is wanting in your colouring.' I begged him to explain it that I might communicate it to you, but he told me 'that it was impossible to convey what he meant by words, but that he was sure (by what you have already produced) he could make you instantly feel it by example, if you were here.' You have his own words, and may therefore judge what use to make of them. . . . I must give you one caution, which is that if any of the Critical Reviews, Examinations, etc., of the Exhibition (which have been published here) should fall into your hands, to pay no manner of regard to what they say, as they are most execrable performances and universally condemned."

The pamphlets against which Bruce warned his friend were *A Critical Examination of the Pictures, Sculptures, etc., Exhibited in the Great Room at Spring Gardens*, and *Le Pour et le Contre*. Of the first I have not been able to discover a copy, but it is referred to in contemptuous fashion in the journals of the time. *Le Pour et le Contre*, which is in verse, and eulogizes Wright of Derby in high-flown terms, is genially described by a contemporary writer as the work of "an hungry Grub Street Hireling, who has jumbled together a parcel of tasteless, ignorant and incongruous remarks."

Reynolds, as I have said, sent nothing to the exhibition of 1767. The reasons for his abstention are by no means clear, and the explanation given by Burke in a letter to James Barry, is unsatisfactory. "The exhibition," writes Burke, "will be opened to-morrow. Reynolds, though he has, I think, some better portraits than he ever before painted, does not think mere heads sufficient, and having no piece of fancy sends in nothing this time." But Reynolds was a portrait painter, and all his previous contributions had been portraits, though sometimes disguised under imaginative titles. It is far more probable, as Leslie and Taylor suggest, that he refrained from exhibiting owing to the disputes among the members of the Incorporated Society. Reynolds, perhaps because he foresaw that the leadership of the English artists must in the end fall to him, was careful always to keep out of their quarrels and to take as little part as possible in the management of the Society, which became more difficult each year owing to the jealousies of certain members and the alleged encroachments of others.

Some of the encroachments upon the rights of the members at large were connected with the arrangement of the exhibitions, and Francis Cotes in particular has been accused of abusing his powers as a Director when serving on the Hanging Committee. Charles Taylor, whose father Isaac Taylor the engraver, was the last Secretary of the Incorporated Society, declared that Cotes was the artist "who by occupying all the best places in the Exhibition Room, gave never pardoned offence among his brethren"; and it is clear that Cotes is the person alluded to in the story of the hanging of the pictures at Spring Gardens told in *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians*. The story refers to 1767, the year with which I am now dealing, when Cotes exhibited portraits of Queen Charlotte with the little Princess Royal, and of the Duchess of Hamilton. The Royal group was one of the show pieces of the year, and is praised by Walpole, and by the author of *Le Pour et le Contre*, who displays his effusive loyalty in the lines:—

"How happy Cotes! Thy happy skill shall shine,
Unrivalled in the class, almost divine;
For Royal Charlotte's finished form is thine!"

In *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians*, a pamphlet which was published in self-justification by the Incorporated Society of Artists in 1771, three years after the foundation of the Academy, it is said that at Spring Gardens, when the exhibition was being arranged:—

"One of the Committee occupied, as usual, two principal situations, in one of which he hung a picture of her Majesty, and in the other that of a lady of quality. The carpenter, going to place a fine piece of shipping belonging to a celebrated artist in that branch of painting, above that of the Queen, the Director called out with great vehemence 'You must not hang that picture there.' 'Why?' 'It will hurt my Queen.' Accordingly it was taken to the other end of the room, when the Director called out with still more vehemence 'It must not be hung there.' 'Why, Sir?' 'Because it will kill my Duchess.'"

This happened in the spring of 1767 and the minutes of the Incorporated Society for that year show that in the autumn Cotes and Newton (the Honorary Secretary) were formally accused by another member, William Thompson, "of unfair transactions relating to the Exhibition." Thompson, however, was unable to

THE KING OF DENMARK IN LONDON

prove his charges, and the explanations made by Cotes and Newton were regarded by the Directors as satisfactory.

But although the incriminated members were acquitted the friction in the Society remained unabated and it reached the breaking-point in 1768, soon after a special exhibition of pictures had been held in honour of the King of Denmark, who visited London in the autumn of that year.

To this exhibition artists were allowed to send pictures that had already been shown publicly, or if new works were contributed, it was with the understanding that they would be received again for the season of 1769. The Danish King was invited to see "the Polite Arts of the Kingdom," and to give His Majesty this pleasure the Society spent £75 for the hire of the gallery and for incidental expenses. The public was not admitted to the exhibition, which was of the most exclusive and private nature and was open only for two days; on the 30th of September for the King and his friends and on the 3rd of October for members of the Society and the other contributors. The tickets for the first day were sent to the Danish Minister, to be distributed at the King's discretion, and the demand for them was considerable among fashionable persons in London. It is said that "one of the greatest ladies in England" applied to the Directors of the Incorporated Society for a ticket, which was refused. To this no exception could be taken if, as it was understood, the right of invitation was in the hands of the Danish King; but it was alleged that one of the Directors, the architect William Chambers, had contrived in spite of the regulations to obtain twelve tickets for his friends.

There is nothing in the minutes of the Incorporated Society about this incident, the authority for which is the pamphlet already mentioned, *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians*, and is therefore not unprejudiced. It may be remarked, however, that long afterwards, in 1789, the newspapers brought a somewhat similar charge against Chambers. They alleged that he endeavoured to obtain, to the exclusion of the other Academicians, the use for his friends of the rooms at Somerset House whose windows commanded a view of the Royal procession to St. Paul's on the occasion of the visit of their Majesties to return thanks for the recovery of George the Third.

According to *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians* the affair of the tickets aroused great indignation in the Society and was

instrumental in causing vital changes in the composition of the body of Directors. The Directors had been appointed when the Society's charter was granted in 1765, and with one or two exceptions had remained in office and successfully opposed proposals that they should retire by rotation. Although supported by the best men in the Society the Directors did not represent the views of the majority of the Fellows, and in August, 1768, the opinion was taken of the Attorney-General, William de Grey (afterwards Lord Walsingham) as to the possibility of making a by-law which would compel their retirement. The Attorney-General said that such a by-law might be made, and its institution a few weeks afterwards brought about the ejection of the President, Francis Hayman, and sixteen of the Directors, and the foundation of a Royal Academy by the King.

Joshua Kirby, who displaced Hayman on the 18th of October, 1768, was backed principally by a crowd of nobodies, the rank and file of the absurdly large number of Fellows, and Kirby's election as President was followed by the resignation of the eight original Directors who had remained in office, Joseph Wilton, Edward Penny, Richard Wilson, Benjamin West, William Chambers, George Michael Moser, Paul Sandby, and Francis Milner Newton. It is curious, if the story of the twelve tickets be true, that Chambers should have managed to retain his seat. The resignation of these men was a heavy blow to the new President of the Incorporated Society of Artists, and it was followed by others no less serious. Among the artists elected as Directors in the place of the sixteen who were driven out were Joshua Reynolds, who had never taken any part in the management of the Society, and Thomas Gainsborough. Both refused to serve, and Reynolds on November 25th, 1768, sent Kirby the following letter:—

"SIR

I beg leave to return my thanks to the gentlemen who have done me the honour of electing me one of the Directors of the Society of Artists. As I have for some years past entirely declined acting as a Director I must now request the favour of declining that honour, the doing which I hope will not be understood as proceeding from any want of respect, as I have made the same request to the former set of Directors.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble and obedient Servant
LEICESTER FIELDS."

JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Gainsborough replied to the same effect in an extremely brief and formal note in which he stated that he declined the Directorship "for particular reasons." His letter is dated December 5th, and the particular reasons probably refer to an invitation to join the Royal Academy, which was founded five days afterwards. Gainsborough's refusal must have hurt Kirby even more than that of Reynolds, for Gainsborough had been on terms of intimate friendship with the new President ever since the days when Kirby was carrying on a coach and house-painting business at Ipswich. Joshua Kirby, a Royal Clerk of Works, was a worthy man of excellent character, but his artistic pretensions were of the slenderest and he was wholly unfitted to act as President of a Society that at the time of his election included among its members, Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Richard Wilson, John Zoffany, Francis Cotes and George Stubbs.

Within a few weeks after the election of Kirby the Royal Academy was founded and Galt says in his life of Benjamin West that the President of the Incorporated Artists heard of the new Society for the first time when he saw a picture by West at Buckingham House. The King, we are told, informed Kirby that it was intended for exhibition at the Royal Academy, and the news affected him so much that he withdrew at once from the Royal presence "and did not long survive the shock." But these, like many other statements in Galt's biography, must be accepted with reserve. His story of Kirby's speedy decease is certainly wrong.

Kirby, as a matter of fact, lived for more than five years after the interview at Buckingham House and survived a far more serious shock in the sudden death of his son William, a young artist of promise who was when a boy the pupil of Gainsborough, and after winning prizes at the Society of Arts was sent to Italy to study architecture at the Royal expense. When William Kirby returned to England the King appointed his wife to the post of housekeeper at Richmond Lodge, and presented the young artist with a house at Kew. He died outside the door of this house one evening in July, 1771, through breaking a blood-vessel when playing with one of his children and lifting it into the air with his arms extended.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Kirby as President of the Incorporated Society; He approaches the King; Disappointing response; "His Majesty's principal object is the Royal Academy"; Reynolds and Gainsborough expelled from the Society by Kirby; The King and Queen at the exhibition; Curious contributions to it; A thirsty Hanging Committee; The Bill for Beer; Portraits in hair; Garrick's commissions for them; The actor's scanty locks; The Society's charities; Mrs. Martha Lely; Zoffany declines office; His letter; The Society's school of art in Maiden Lane; Letter from Romney asking for admission; Mortimer presents a lay-figure; A spy at the Royal Academy; The art class at the Duke of Richmond's gallery; Women artists elected to membership of the Incorporated Society; Bitter complaint of a rejected painter; Secession of Zoffany, Cosway and Peters; Romney exhibits with the Incorporated Society; Unpopularity of George the Third; Kirby resigns the Presidentship; Succeeded by James Paine the architect; The Society builds an exhibition gallery; Opened in state in 1772; Christie advances money to the Society; A financial collapse; Sale of the Gallery; Letter from Wright of Derby.

JOSHUA KIRBY bore his reverses with a brave front, and as President of the Incorporated Society of Artists strove hard to face the rivalry of the newly founded Royal Academy. In one respect the Society had an advantage. The funds accumulated from the profits of the exhibitions of the preceding seven years remained in its possession, while the Academy had nothing but what the King, its patron, chose to give. But in spite of this the odds were hopelessly against Kirby, and a letter from the newly elected President to his brother shows that he undertook the duties of the office with anything but a light heart. He says, writing from Kew on November 22nd, 1768:—

"You have heard, I apprehend, that I have been made President of the Society of Artists of Great Britain. It is an honour unexpected and undeserved. It is very like dressing a man in a fine robe, and then fixing a weight to the train of it that he with all his abilities is but just able to tug after him. I am placed at the head of a respectable but divided body of men. God grant that I may be able to introduce that kind of union amongst them that I sincerely wish could be effected through every part of this divided and distracted Kingdom."

One of the President's first duties was to present a petition to the King, asking for his support, and on this petition the members of the Society based the highest hopes, for Kirby, owing

to his position in the Royal Household, was known to have the ear of His Majesty. The King's reply was friendly enough but far less favourable than it appears to be in the version given by Robert Strange. Strange says in his *Inquiry into the Rise of the Royal Academy* that the King replied to the petition presented through Kirby:—

“That the Society had his Majesty's protection; that he did not mean to encourage one set of men more than another: that having extended his favour to the Society by Royal Charter he had also encouraged the new petitioners (the Royal Academy); that his Majesty's intention was to patronize the Arts, and that the Society might rest assured his Royal favour should be equally extended to both.”

A comparison of Strange's report with Kirby's own words and italics, copied from the draft of his address and now printed for the first time, shows that the King did intend to encourage one set of men more than another, and that he was on the side of the Academy. The King's reply to the petition was conveyed to the members of the Incorporated Society at a general meeting held on the tenth of January, 1769.

“Gentlemen,” said Kirby, “I have delivered your petition to his Majesty and it was very graciously received. I am commanded by his Majesty to tell you in answer. That you are *protected* by your Charter. That his Majesty's *principal object* is the *Royal Academy*, but that he will encourage without *distinction* every Society for the promoting and advancing of the *liberal arts*; therefore our body will not be deprived of his Majesty's attention. I hope that this gracious declaration of his Majesty's fully answers your expectations, for I should be extremely unhappy were I to find that you expected more from my presenting the petition than I know it is in my power to obtain.”

Kirby followed this admission of his failure by a speech in which he endeavoured to encourage his disheartened followers by holding forth visions of brighter prospects in the future; but the meaning of the Royal message was unmistakable and it was evident even to the most sanguine that so far as the King was concerned the Incorporated Society was to take the second place. Of George the Third's share in the negotiations that led to the foundation of the Royal Academy little is known, and in the recriminations that followed that foundation it was hinted that His Majesty had not behaved fairly to the older institution. He

was, however, defended some years later by an anonymous writer in the *Artist's Repository* (probably Charles Taylor) who declared that "contrary to what has been asserted a great personage acted with much candour and circumspection in the business alluded to. It is not commonly known that a correspondence passed between Mr. Kirby and Sir William Chambers the whole of which was submitted to Royal inspection, and would have had its desired effect in Sir William's conversion, but for manœuvres which it would be vain to mention."

Although Chambers was the principal agent in the foundation of the Royal Academy he maintained friendly relations with Kirby for some time after the disruption of 1768, as we see by a letter in which it is suggested that the Royal Academy and the Incorporated Society should collaborate in an act of charity. Chambers writes to Kirby:—

"DEAR SIR

There is a poor widow of an ingenious painter whose name was Barbor, and who always exhibited and was a member of the Society of Artists, who is left in great want with her two children. One of them her husband's relations have taken care of, but the other a very fine boy of seven or eight years of age, is entirely destitute. It will be a noble act of charity to educate and preserve this boy, and however separate our Societies may be in other respects let us be unanimous in good works. If you can prevail upon your Society to allow ten pounds a year for two years or three I will prevail upon ours of the Royal Academy to allow the same sum for the same time in order to educate and support the boy and fit him for a good trade. Be as expeditious as you can in bringing this about for the wants of the poor people are pressing. With compliments to Mrs. Kirby, I am, Dear Sir,

Most sincerely your obedient servant

WM. CHAMBERS."

This letter, which does credit to the heart of Chambers, is dated March 13th, 1769, but all chance of joint action between the Royal Academy and the Incorporated Society was destroyed in the following June. The minutes of the Society show that at a general meeting held on the 6th of that month "the President acquainted the Society that the following Fellows had exhibited at the Royal Academy in Pall Mall." He then moved that the

THE KING AT THE EXHIBITION

artists mentioned, among whom were Reynolds and Gainsborough, should be expelled and their names struck off the parchment roll, and this was agreed to. It is worth recording that the Directors of the Incorporated Society of Artists who consented to the expulsion of the Academicians included Ozias Humphry, Isaac Gosset, William Marlow, John Zoffany, John Henry Mortimer, Henry Ryland and Robert Strange.

In the spring of 1769 the first exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists under the leadership of Kirby was held at Spring Gardens, and the new President, to his great joy, managed to induce the King and Queen to promise to visit the gallery. Proud of his success he wrote to the Secretary, James Paine, to prepare him for this important event:—

“With infinite pleasure I inform you that their Majesties will do our Society the great honour of going to the Exhibition on the afternoon of Thursday next. His Majesty desires that *only the officers*, viz., yourself, Mr. Paton, Mr. Stubbs, Mr. Ralph and myself, may attend them; and therefore you will please to give notice to those gentlemen that they may be ready to receive from their gracious and condescending King and Queen the highest degree of pleasure and encouragement.”

The King and Queen, accompanied by two of the Mecklenburg Princes, visited Spring Gardens on May 11th. But the patronage of Royalty could not compensate for the lack of artists, and as most of those of importance had left the Incorporated Society it was inevitable that the exhibition should be markedly inferior to its predecessor of 1768, at which more than eighteen thousand visitors had paid a shilling each for admission. In 1769 Zoffany showed ten works, and he, with Wright of Derby and Stubbs, were the principal exhibitors. The majority of the contributions were by artists whose names are now forgotten, or by amateurs who were allowed, in addition to pictures, to show such things as “An Old Man’s head done with a hot Iron,” an early example of what we now call “poker work”; “a vase of flowers in shell work”; and a portrait of a lady “composed of human hair.” The artists of repute who were represented in addition to Zoffany and Wright included Cosway, who sent a miniature; Valentine Green, Robert Strange and William Woollett, the engravers; and William Peters who showed some portraits in crayons. The names of the managers of this curiously mixed exhibition are not given in the minutes, but they must have been

thirsty souls if they consumed the refreshments supplied to the Spring Gardens gallery from an adjacent tavern, the bill for which still exists:—

“June 2nd, 1769.

Account of beer to the Exhibition Rooms.

	£	s.	d.
To 113 Quarts	1	12	11½
To one quart more			3½
	£1	13	3

Received the contents in full of all demands by me,
JOHN MARSH.”

Portraits “composed of human hair,” such as the one shown at the exhibition, were common at this period, and a letter to Garrick shows that they were popular in the most aristocratic circles. The letter is from a miniature painter, Anne Louisa Lane, who with her sister, Mary Lane, was engaged for many years producing hair-pictures. The sisters, whose contributions cannot always be distinguished, as sometimes they are assigned to “Miss Lane” without any prefix, exhibited many hair-pictures at the gallery of the Society of Artists between 1770 and 1777. These included *Portrait of a Nobleman worked with a needle in his own hair*; *A Sea Storm*; *A Flora from Guercino*; and landscapes after Hollar and Claude.

The letter to Garrick is interesting for its glimpse of the actor’s intimate and friendly connection with two of the great ladies of his time, the Countess Spencer and her daughter the Duchess of Devonshire; from whom, presumably, he received the tresses promised to Miss Lane. The Mr. Campbell mentioned by her was John Campbell of Pembrokehire, afterwards raised to the Peerage as Lord Cawdor, whose portrait Sir Joshua exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1778. Probably it was in 1778, or 1777, that Miss Lane wrote her humble and grateful, but undated, letter to Garrick:—

“DEAR SIR

Your great goodness in letting us know of (your) intention to employ us in doing something in Lady Spencer’s and the Duchess of Devonshire’s hairs, occasioned me to wait on you to acknowledge the important obligation and at the same time

PORTRAITS IN HAIR

to let you know that Sir Joshua Reynolds received me very politely when I waited upon him according to your orders to ask the liberty of copying Mr. Campbell's picture, and said he would with pleasure lend it whenever he had Mr. Campbell's permission to do so.

I had the mortification to be told at your house that you were too ill to see anyone—for a little artizan who depends so greatly on your patronage to express her concern for the illness of one whose health is immeasurably interesting would sound very trifling, though both interest and gratitude concur to make it sincere.

I should be very neglectful of the first four interests if I was not eager to make use of your generous notice of it, Sir; and this is the only excuse I have to offer for taking the liberty to address you thus to request the favour of being allowed to begin immediately upon one of the pictures you have had the goodness to propose our doing—principally another copy of your own picture in the manner of that Lady Spencer has, or that of Shakespeare which you were so good as to say you would permit us to make a copy of with your own hair; or one of those to be done in Lady Spencer's or the Duchess of Devonshire's hairs. As for that of Mr. Campbell we must wait till we get Mr. Campbell's or your order to get it from Sir Joshua Reynolds.

I am, Sir,

Your greatly obliged

And very grateful servant

ANNE LOUISA LANE."

Garrick, who loved portraits of himself in any medium, seems to have been interested in these hair likenesses. Miss Lane executed several for him and might have produced others if the supply of the essential raw material had been adequate. Unfortunately the actor did not make her acquaintance until he was advanced in years, and his hair was then scanty, as he confessed in a note written to the artist not long before his death. "Mr. Garrick presents his compliments to Miss Lane—he has sent a little of Mrs. Garrick's and his own hairs. He has but one lock behind or he would have sent more."

William Chambers, in the letter already quoted, mentions the charities of the Incorporated Society of Artists, and to these

there are frequent references in the minutes. I cannot, however, find that anything was paid to Mrs. Barbor, the poor widow of the artist, Lucius Barbor, on whose behalf the appeal was made to Kirby; but it is satisfactory to know that Chambers not long afterwards managed to obtain ten guineas for her from the funds of the Royal Academy. But although Mrs. Barbor was unsuccessful in the appeal to the Incorporated Society, few applicants were sent empty away if they could claim any legitimate connection with the arts.

As early as July, 1761, some of the profits of the first exhibition at Spring Gardens were distributed, chiefly, as it appears, to the widows and orphans of painters. Ten guineas were given to the widow of Peter Monamy; and a similar sum to the three children of another marine painter, Charles Brooking, whose picture *The Calm: A Seashore Scene*, hangs in the National Gallery. Mrs. Mercier, who also received ten guineas was, I imagine, the widow of Philip Mercier; and the Miss Mercier, "sick and in great distress," to whom two guineas were given in the following November, was no doubt that unhappy daughter of Mercier's who died not long afterwards in a London workhouse. Mrs. Mercier was engaged in 1762 to look after the miniatures in the exhibition and two years later was appointed "Stationer to the Society." Five guineas were given in 1761 "at the discretion of Mr. Hogarth" to the Widow Weldon. Of her I know nothing; or of a Mr. Read, landscape painter, to whom a similar sum was granted in 1768, "to release him out of prison."

Among the petitioners for relief in 1768 was Mrs. Martha Lely, who claimed to be "the widow of John Lely, face-painter, and disciple of Mr. Gibson, of Charles Street, Covent Garden, and grandson of that eminent painter, Sir Peter Lely." The widow further stated that she was now "upwards of sixty years of age, frequently afflicted with illness, and so far reduced in her circumstances as to be compelled to accept a refuge in Migg's Almshouses at Mile End, which relief (though the demands for her mere subsistence are but small) is nevertheless far from being sufficient to preserve her from the terror of indigence." Her story was accepted by Kirby who wrote on the back of the widow's petition a recommendation for her relief. She was presented with two guineas, and in 1769 was appointed in succession to Mrs. Mercier to look after the miniatures in the exhibition which needed careful watching.

Her husband was the subject of some verses published in 1737, in which he is described as the grandson of Sir Peter Lely. He seems to have studied landscape as well as figure, as the verdant beauties of his "painted meadows" are praised as highly as his portraits of the Ladies Sunderland, Ranelagh and Torrington. John Lely's position does not appear to have been prosperous even in 1737, for the poet hints at injuries caused by professional jealousy and exhorts the artist to persevere in spite of an evident want of public appreciation:—

"Go on my friend, an envious age despise,
Refine the tasteless while you charm the wise,
And show to what a pitch neglected worth may rise."

As Zoffany was the most prominent of the artists who had remained faithful to the Incorporated Society and as he had sent ten pictures to the first exhibition held after Kirby's election, he was re-elected to a Directorship and offered a place on the Committee that managed the Academy for drawing and painting established by the Society in Maiden Lane. But here again, disappointment awaited the unhappy Kirby. Zoffany had already been approached by the opposition and was probably well aware that he was soon to be nominated by the King as a Royal Academician. For Zoffany, though not one of the original members of the Academy, never passed through the preliminary grade of Associate. He and William Hoare of Bath were together nominated Academicians on December 11th, 1769. Zoffany's letter to Kirby, written in one long sentence, is full of polite phrases and good wishes, but indicates plainly that he intends to sever his connection with the Incorporated Society.

"SIR

Sensible of the regard shown me by you and the Directors and Fellows of the Incorporated Society of Artists by their unanimity in re-electing me a Director of the Society for the present year, as well as in their choice of me into the Committee for the government of the academy: it is with great regret that I am constrained to acquaint you that my business requires me, very soon, to leave England for some time, and consequently must deprive me of all opportunities of attending to the affairs of the Society, and also being sensible that there are many ingenious gentlemen amongst us who are equally

desirous to give all possible attention for the promoting of so useful an institution, and that my continuance in the Direction and in the Committee during my absence will be attended with much inconvenience to the body by keeping such other gentlemen from giving the necessary assistance I must beg leave of you and the Society to resign my opportunities. Assuring you that I am with the greatest respect for you and the Society in general,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

JOHAN ZOFFANY.

Joshua Kirby, Esq.

November 22nd, 1769."

The academy, or school of art whose direction Zoffany had been asked to share was conducted in apartments in Maiden Lane, and was intended to take the place of the old St. Martin's Lane Academy, with which the Incorporated Society had been closely connected but was now absorbed by the Royal Academy. The question of this absorption, and its manner, had caused much bad feeling between the rival institutions; and, if the statements of the Incorporated Society can be accepted, the acquisition of the fittings of the school in St. Martin's Lane by the Royal Academy was accomplished by a piece of sharp practice on the part of its future Keeper, George Michael Moser.

At St. Martin's Lane the Academy had been supported partly by the Incorporated Society and partly by the subscriptions of the members; and Moser, who had long been its principal manager, informed these members in 1767 that the King intended to found an Academy for instruction in drawing and painting in Pall Mall (in the rooms formerly occupied by Aaron Lambe, the auctioneer), to which they would all have free access. Therefore, said Moser, there would be no further need for the Academy in St. Martin's Lane; and on the strength of his promise that they would be granted free admission to the Royal classes the members signed a document, already prepared, which authorized the removal of the casts, anatomical figures, lamps, easels and other effects to Pall Mall.

When this had been accomplished the members were told that the so-called "Royal" art school had no funds and that unless they subscribed a guinea each they would be excluded from it and denied the use of their own properties. These properties were

taken over by the Keeper of the Royal Academy when it was founded a year later, in December, 1768, and the rooms in Pall Mall were used by the new institution for the purpose of its schools. The Incorporated Society, then excluded from Pall Mall, applied to the Royal Academy for the return of the fittings, etc., of the old St. Martin's Lane Academy, and was informed that they should be either returned or paid for. But neither of these things was done, and after waiting some time the Incorporated Society was compelled to furnish at its own expense a new Academy in Maiden Lane.

This is the story told by the Incorporated Society in the pamphlet *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians*, to the charges in which no answer, so far as I am aware, was made by the Royal Academy. The statements in the pamphlet may be unfounded—for there is no record in the minutes of the Royal Academy of an application from the Incorporated Society for the return of the fittings of the St. Martin's Lane Academy. But one thing is quite certain, that the Royal Academy schools were not, as is commonly supposed, an original foundation when they were opened in 1769, but a direct continuation under another name of the old Academy of drawing and painting in which Hogarth, Ramsay, Reynolds and Gainsborough had all worked.

William Sandby, in his *History of the Royal Academy of Arts*, says that "within a month of its foundation, arrangements were made for opening a school, consisting of an antique academy and a school for the living model," and Sir Frederick Eaton has supported these statements. But when the Royal Academy was founded on the 10th of December, 1768, the school in Pall Mall was already open, and some of the old St. Martin's Lane men were working there—those who had paid the guinea subscription. In fact, one of the first resolutions made by the Council of the Royal Academy was concerned with the present and future position of these old students. This resolution, of December 27th, 1768, decrees:—

"That those students who have already paid their subscriptions to the Academy in Pall Mall shall be admitted to the Royal Academy to draw this season, till the expiration of the Winter Academy, after which time they shall be subject to the same regulations as prescribed for the admission of other students. That those students who have neglected to pay their subscriptions to the Old Academy shall not be admitted to

draw in the Royal Academy till they have gone through the usual forms of admission."

The Incorporated Society's Academy of Drawing in Maiden Lane was held in the former auction room of John Moreing, the room in which the Free Artists held their exhibitions in 1765 and 1766. Moreing let it to the Society at a yearly rental of £55. The Academy remained in existence three or four years and some eminent men were concerned in its management. It is recorded in a minute of January, 1770, that the great surgeon, John Hunter, had agreed with the Directors to give lectures on anatomy to the students. One of the first applicants for permission to work in the life class at Maiden Lane was an artist no less distinguished than George Romney, who in November, 1769, addressed the following letter to the President and Directors of the Society:—

"GENTLEMEN

Seeing by the Publick Papers that you have opened your Academy, shall esteem it a favour that I may be admitted to the same, with respect

I am

Your Humble Servant

GEORGE ROMNEY."

This letter is docketed "read same time and leave given him," and an entry in the minutes of the following year shows that he not only worked in the school (a fact unmentioned by his biographers) but was appointed to the Committee whose members took it in turn, week by week, to pose the models and keep order in the life class. The laws of the Society ordained:—"That the Artist who sets the model shall preside in the Academy every evening during the sittings of his said model; he shall take care that due decorum be preserved in the Academy during the said time."

A lay-figure was required for the use of the students and it had been agreed to purchase one at a cost of not more than twenty pounds, when John Hamilton Mortimer, then Vice-President of the Society, offered to present one to the school. It was somewhat out of repair, and the minutes of November, 1770, contain the following resolution:—"That Messrs. Humphry, Ward and Romney be empowered to order the repair of the layman which Mr. Mortimer has offered the Society, and to provide proper

drapery." The Ward mentioned in this connection was Captain F. S. Ward, a frequent exhibitor of sketches and studies of life in India at the Society's gallery, and the third artist was Ozias Humphry the miniature painter. It was perhaps at the Maiden Lane Academy that Humphry became acquainted with Romney, with whom two or three years later he made the well-known journey to Italy. Humphry appears to have been connected with Maiden Lane more intimately than Romney, for there is a record of his paying the model in circumstances that are not altogether creditable. The record is as follows:—"Paid to Mr. Humphry for the Woman Model sitting, and for her examination as to the transactions of the Royal Academy, £1 12s. 6d." The "Woman Model" no doubt sat at other schools and places where she could find employment, and appears to have acted as a spy at the Royal Academy and to have retailed to Humphry such information as she could pick up concerning its affairs. Humphry long afterwards became a member of the Royal Academy; and so too did Francis Wheatley, another student who was working at this time at Maiden Lane. Henry Walton was among the applicants for admission to the school in 1770.

The facilities for art education at the disposal of the Incorporated Society were largely increased when the Duke of Richmond placed under its control the gallery of casts from the antique in his house at Whitehall. The Duke, whose public-spirited action did not receive the recognition it deserved, first threw open the gallery to students in 1758 and for some time after this date Cipriani and Wilton gave instruction there to all comers. Private drawing masters, also, such as Henry and William Pars, were allowed to send their pupils to Richmond House and to visit them when there and correct their drawings from the cast.

The charge of the gallery was taken over by the Incorporated Society in August, 1770, when a very humble and flattering letter of thanks was addressed to the Duke by William Woollett the engraver, who was at that time the honorary secretary. How long the gallery of casts remained in the hands of the Society or when it was closed altogether I have been unable to discover, but apparently it was the misconduct of the students themselves that brought about the withdrawal of their privileges by the Duke of Richmond. A writer in a newspaper of 1791 says:—

"The Duke's collection of casts from the antique was the

basis of the most accurate draughtsman that was ever born in this country: the late Mr. Mortimer, who was for many years very assiduous in his attendance at the gallery, to which he it recorded in honour of his Grace he admitted every artist that applied, until some young men among them mutilated many of the statues by wantonly breaking off fingers, thumbs or toes. This naturally produced an exclusion of the innocent with the guilty."

Inspired probably by the appointment to membership of the Royal Academy of Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser, the Incorporated Society in 1769 elected a number of women artists to honorary membership, including Miss Catherine Read, Miss Benwell, Mrs. Grace, Miss Gardiner and Miss Black. The last named, who was the daughter of an obscure portrait and drapery painter, is said to have been an extremely skilful copyist of Old Masters and to have imitated to perfection a famous Teniers belonging to Lord Godolphin. She had also a large and aristocratic connection as a teacher of pastel painting to ladies, many of whom took to Sir Joshua for criticism the studies executed under her direction. Some of the Princesses were among her pupils.

More important artistically than Miss Black was Catherine Read. Of this lady a curious description has come down to us from the pen of Fanny Burney, who after speaking of Catherine Read as the Rosalba of Britain, who in crayons had a grace and softness of colouring rarely surpassed, adds:—

"Her works and person were almost divertingly at variance, for while the works were all loveliness, their author was saturnine, cold, taciturn, and absent to an extreme; awkward and full of mischances in every motion; ill accoutred even beyond negligence in her dress, and plain enough to produce, grotesquely, an effect that was almost picturesque. Yet with all this outward lack of allurements her heart was kind, her temper humane, and her friendships zealous. But she had met with some misfortunes in early life that had embittered her existence and kept it always wavering in a miserable balance between heartless apathy and pining discontent."

As honorary members the women who belonged to the Incorporated Society were concerned with it only as exhibitors and therefore did not compare in rank with the two female Royal Academicians who were allowed a voice in the adjudication of

COMPLAINT OF A REJECTED ARTIST

the gold medals and travelling scholarships, and could vote at elections. They did vote, frequently, but in the case of Angelica Kauffman invariably by letter addressed to the President. Mary Moser, on the other hand, often attended General Assemblies of the Academicians, between 1779 and 1810, and took part in the proceedings.

In the eighteenth century the cry of the rejected artist was as bitter as it is to-day, but the modern sculptor or painter, as a rule, bears his rebuffs philosophically—at least, outwardly. His predecessors were less reticent and sometimes went so far as to threaten those who had failed to appreciate their work. Joshua Kirby had to deal with one of these combatant artists, whose letter has been preserved among the papers of the Incorporated Society. The writer was a drawing master named Burgess, of Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields; possibly an ancestor of the late J. B. Burgess, R.A., whose forefathers for several generations were artists. Burgess says, in writing to complain to Kirby of the rejection of some of his works:—

“I sent you four figures (drawings) with two portraits in oil in expectation of seeing them in your exhibition. I find you have accepted one, the worst of my figures, only; those of my drawings you have rejected are infinitely better than any you have in your room; as also my portraits than a good number, for I see there many most vile. Thus 'tis evident you have used me very ill, and 'tis certain I expect my redress, for 'tis in your power—the injury is too great to be born with patience. I shall expect an answer to this and proceed accordingly.”

This pugnacious drawing master may, I think, be the man mentioned in a letter written a few years earlier to Ozias Humphry, who at that time thought of joining Shipley's school of art in the Strand, at which Cosway and Nollekens were pupils. “Our school,” says Shipley, “flourishes very much at present, and I have at a great expense procured a number of capital drawings, and my new assistant, Mr. Burgess, is perhaps as good a draughtsman as any artist in the Kingdom.”

At the exhibition of 1770, Zoffany, Cosway and Peters were unrepresented. They had all gone over to the Royal Academy and Spring Gardens knew them no more; but Wright of Derby as yet remained faithful to the Incorporated Society whose exhibition in this year was strengthened by four pictures by Stubbs and two by Romney. The two canvases by Romney, No.

112 *Melancholy* and No. 113 *Mirth*, were the first works shown by him at the exhibition of the Society in whose school he had been drawing during the preceding winter. I have found no mention of them in the newspapers of the time except in those lines of verse describing Romney as

“A blushing, backward candidate for fame
At once its country’s honour and its shame”

which says Cunningham in a high-flown but incorrect passage, were written to celebrate the painter’s departure for Italy in 1773. “The roar of the ocean,” says Cunningham, “deafened the ear of the painter to the flattery and melody of numbers such as these.” The verses, by Richard Cumberland, which include the two lines quoted above, appeared in the *Public Advertiser* of June 12th, 1770, when Romney was living in London and his pictures were still on view. Cumberland, who describes the *Melancholy* as a figure of “heavenly Contemplation,” mentions it again in a footnote which indicates the relative neglect of the Incorporated Society’s exhibition after the foundation of the Royal Academy. “The few,” he says, “who attended the unfashionable exhibition at Spring Gardens, may possibly recollect to have seen a full-length figure which answers to this character, painted by one Romney, a name totally unknown to the modern Professors of Virtu.”

Society, following the example of the King, was neglecting Spring Gardens, which perhaps on this account received the support of a radical paper of that day, the *Middlesex Journal*. It was a time when George the Third was unpopular; when, as the Frenchman Grosley noticed with surprise, the coachmen and carmen on the Windsor road never stopped at the King’s approach and took a pride in neglecting to salute him. Grosley declares that “the insolent rabble,” as he calls them, said, “Why should we bow to George? He should bow to us; he lives at our expense.” The writer of some verse in the *Middlesex Journal* congratulates the Incorporated Artists upon the King’s want of appreciation of their exhibition, and tells them to:—

“Thank Heaven, His Majesty has not your taste,
Thank Heaven, you are not by his smile disgraced.”

The exhibition of 1770 was the last held under the presidency of Joshua Kirby, who on the 15th of June resigned a post for

which he had few qualifications beyond honesty and good intentions. But he was liked by all, and the fact that he was an authority on perspective made the promoters of the Royal Academy desirous of including him in that body when it was founded in December, 1768. This is shown by a valuable letter quoted by Mr. Arthur T. Bolton in *The Portrait of Sir John Soane*, and dated December 13th, two months after Kirby's election as President of the Incorporated Society. The letter is the joint composition of Paul and Thomas Sandby and William Tyler, three of the newly-appointed Academicians, and is addressed to Sawrey Gilpin the animal painter. Gilpin is urged to lose no time in applying for membership of the Academy, as the list is nearly full. "Zoffany and Mortimer," he is told, "have promised, and your friend Marlow now wavers in his resolution." A list of the Academicians already appointed is enclosed and in it Kirby figures as Professor of Perspective. But Kirby—if invited—resisted temptation and the Academy Professorship was bestowed upon Samuel Wale.

Kirby was succeeded as President by the architect, James Paine, an able, ambitious man who had been responsible for much of the friction that brought about the disruption of the Incorporated Society in 1768 and the foundation of the Royal Academy in the same year. In the biographical articles on Benjamin West, published in *La Belle Assemblée* in 1808, which seem to have been compiled from material supplied by the artist, it is said of the quarrels that wrecked the Society:—

"In the struggle to obtain the government of this institution two parties were formed, of the most opposite and hostile interests, headed by two architects. Mr. Chambers, afterwards Sir William Chambers, was at the head of one party; and Mr. Paine, a gentleman of considerable eminence in his profession, governed the other. Each of these gentlemen being in the Directory, and each struggling for an ascendancy over that body, the interest of Mr. Paine prevailed at a general election, and the friends of the latter alone were admitted."

In 1768 it had been the desire of both the rival architects to design for the Incorporated Society a building that would include an exhibition gallery and rooms suitable for a school of art; and Paine, now that authority was at length placed in his hands, set about the realization of this scheme. In February, 1771, the Directors recommended the purchase of a site, and the catalogue

of the exhibition of that year, to which Romney, Stubbs and Wright contributed, contained an announcement that it was the last to be held at Spring Gardens; as the Incorporated Society of Artists had "purchased a Plat of Land in a situation more convenient and central to the Inhabitants of this Great Metropolis, on which to erect an Academy, Exhibition Room, etc."

Garrick was part proprietor of the land purchased, and "it had been intended by him for the site of his theatre, if circumstances had so turned out." It was on the north side of the Strand and it so happens that the Lyceum Theatre—the scene of Irving's triumphs—now stands on the exact spot Garrick chose as the site of a playhouse. The purchase of this land was the beginning of the downfall of the Incorporated Society of Artists. Its cost was £2,522, and it was necessary to spend more than £5,000 on the building. To meet this expenditure the Society had only £3,000 invested in the Funds, which realized £2,610 when sold. Therefore it was necessary to build on borrowed money and in June, 1771, a committee was empowered to raise a loan of £5,000 for this purpose. Paine, who designed the building and superintended its erection, appears to have employed labour directly without the intervention of a contractor, as there are among the Society's papers receipts for bills due to bricklayers, carpenters, etc. It is curious that the name of the tradesman who supplied the window-frames was Joshua Reynolds.

Rapid progress was made with the building during the winter and spring of 1771-2, but meanwhile fresh dissensions arose. William Thompson, the artist who in 1767 charged Cotes and Newton with unfairness, and who had some connection with the house in Soho Square kept by the notorious Mrs. Cornelys, actually came to blows with another member whose name is not mentioned in the minutes; and immediately before the opening of the exhibition a serious quarrel took place between the President and the painter, Robert Edge Pine. In a furious letter written by Pine the President was charged with insulting behaviour tending to destroy the institution; and a few weeks later Pine and his brother Simon the miniature painter were both expelled from the Society.

The gallery with its chocolate-coloured dado and green discoloured walls was finished in time for the exhibition of 1772, and Paine's design was universally admired. Walpole speaks of it as a very fine and handsome building and according to a

THE SOCIETY'S NEW GALLERY

contemporary description it was nearly twice as large as the old room at Spring Gardens and much better lighted, and had besides the advantage of being on the same level as the street. It was opened with great state and ceremony on the 11th of May, in the presence of a company described as "noble, select and respectable"; and Paine was generous enough to invite on this occasion his old enemy Chambers as well as Sir Joshua Reynolds and the other officers of the Royal Academy. It does not appear, however, that any of them responded to Paine's advances. The ceremony of opening the gallery was accompanied by a musical performance conducted by the famous Giardini, who was assisted by an orchestra that included Crodill, the elder Parke, and other eminent performers. Most of these gave their services, but the bills preserved among the Society's papers show that thirty shillings were paid to an oboe player and a guinea each to twelve violinists.

Mrs. Weichsell sang the principal solos in an ode, composed and set to music for the occasion, which concluded with the chorus:—

"Behold the Arts around us bloom
And its muse-devoted Dome
Rivals the works of Athens and of Rome."

But the institution whose members were to rival the artistic achievements of Greece and Italy was doomed to failure from the first. It was not the debt of five thousand pounds or the lack of Court patronage that made its position hopeless; it was the fact that nearly all the artists were on the side of the Royal Academy. Romney, it is true, showed two portraits at this first exhibition in the newly built gallery; and Stubbs and Mortimer and Wright of Derby were also among the contributors. Even this combination, weak as it was in comparison with that of the Academy, headed by such giants as Reynolds and Gainsborough, did not endure. Romney exhibited no pictures anywhere after 1772, and Stubbs, Mortimer and Wright ultimately deserted to the camp of the enemy, leaving behind them little but mediocrity, or worse.

However, Paine and his supporters did their best to give to the Society a semblance of life and vigour, and it is to their credit that they made arrangements for the delivery of a series of lectures by Dr. Awsiter on the chemistry of pigments, a good

example that was followed by the Royal Academy—but not until a century later. Lectures were also given, by Monsieur André, on anatomy for artists. A Chaplain was appointed to the Society in the person of the Rev. James Wills, the prototype of the painter William Peters, R.A., who afterwards became Chaplain to the Royal Academy. Wills, originally an artist, was for some years connected with Hogarth and Hayman in the management of the Academy in St. Martin's Lane. The cause of his abandonment of the Arts for the Church is explained in the sketch of his career given in Vol. 2, pp. 272-279.

In the autumn of 1772, six months after the opening of the new gallery, George Stubbs, who had previously acted as Treasurer to the Society, was elected President in the place of James Paine. The architect, who was one of the few men of means connected with the institution, appears to have resented his supersession as soon afterwards he withdrew his security for the money borrowed to build the gallery, and from that time forth the Incorporated Society was involved in financial difficulties. These became so serious that in March, 1773, it was agreed to let the gallery to Mr. Christie the auctioneer at a rent of £200 a year, subject to the conditions that he should allow the Society the use of it each season for the exhibition, and take up the mortgage on the premises by advancing £5,000 at five per cent. Christie's pressing letters show that the Society found it difficult at times to pay the interest, and it is curious to notice that in one of these demands the auctioneer signs his name "Christy." The writing is particularly clear:—

"PALL MALL, *May 2*, 1774.

GENTLEMEN

I hope, and doubt not, by this time you are in receipt of a great deal of cash, and therefore request that you will direct the proper person to call on me on Saturday next and pay the money I have advanced for the Society. Your compliance will oblige,

Gentlemen, your well wisher and humble servant,
JAMES CHRISTY."

This letter was soon followed by another of a more peremptory nature, and Christie, as the minutes show, was not the only person who was pressing the Society for money in 1774. Yet a few

ROMNEY DECLINES TO EXHIBIT

months later the Directors, when writing to Romney, then at Venice, to beg him to exhibit, express themselves hopefully regarding the future. They say that peace and harmony have been restored to the Society; that at the close of the preceding season the first payments to the creditors had been made good; and that they reckoned out of the profits of the three coming exhibitions to save six or seven hundred pounds each year, and to have the satisfaction besides of owning the best gallery in the Kingdom. This letter, written in February, 1775, was signed by Sawrey Gilpin, J. H. Mortimer, Francis Wheatley (all afterwards members of the Royal Academy), John Smart, William Marlow and John Dixon the engraver; who, to encourage Romney still more, told him that all the principal members had bound themselves under a penalty of a hundred pounds each "to exhibit their utmost till the debts on the building are discharged."

Romney, however, declined to contribute to the exhibition of 1775 and in the following season one of the creditors, Mrs. Bunce, the printer of the catalogues, threatened the too sanguine Directors with the Court of Exchequer. Mrs. Bunce was temporarily appeased by a promise that all the money taken at the doors should be handed over to her, less the actual costs of the exhibition; but disaster was by now inevitable and in September, 1776, "the best gallery in the Kingdom" was placed in the hands of Christie for sale by auction. The building, upon which, with the site, nearly £8,000 had been spent, was bought by a Mr. John Turner of Birmingham for £4,770, and in the following spring the once-proud Incorporated Society was reduced to begging the justices to allow the poor-rate to stand over as there was not sufficient cash in hand to pay it. Henceforth the Society was without a permanent address and its Council and general meetings were held in coffee-houses and taverns.

In the spring of 1777 the only place available for an exhibition was Philips' auction room in Piccadilly. The recently sold gallery in the Strand might have been hired for the season if the Society had not been forestalled, unfortunately, by one of its members, Philip Tassaert the painter and picture dealer and one of the experts and valuers employed by Christie. He had managed to secure the gallery for an exhibition of his own, composed of pictures ancient and modern, and curiosities of all kinds. This he called the "Grand Museum," and in his published announcements disclaimed all connection with "the exhibition of the

Incorporated Society of Artists, removed to Piccadilly." The Society issued counter-statements and for some weeks a war of advertisements and handbills was waged between Tassaert and the institution of which he was still a member.

The room in Piccadilly was large and fairly well lighted, but disfigured by an ungrammatical and misspelt advertisement of the auctioneer's business, painted round the room in huge letters just below the cornice. After the comfort and convenience of the Strand premises, "the finest gallery in London," the accommodation in Piccadilly appeared contemptible, but in the opinion of the *Morning Post* it was too good for most of the pictures displayed upon the walls. The critic of that journal says, when writing about the Incorporated Artists:—

"The persecuted and wandering members of this drooping Society, driven from their own elegant room in the Strand by the decrease of their funds, have just strength enough to make another exhibition in its consumptive state at an auction room in Piccadilly, which seems the last melancholy receptacle of this departing body. Yet amidst the wretched trash that bedaubs the rooms there are a few productions that are exceedingly capital, and will do honour to the artists who painted them when the name of this Society is gone and forgotten. These we shall point out with pleasure and leave the numerous daubings that surround them to remain without a comment."

However, the Incorporated Society was not completely exhausted in 1777, and for some years afterwards exhibitions were held in such galleries as could be hired. But they were never prosperous, and, as I have already shown, the attempt made in 1786 to combine the Incorporated Society with the moribund Free Society of Artists was unsuccessful. The last exhibitions of the Incorporated Society, held in 1790 and 1791, would have passed almost unnoticed except for the contributions of George Morland.

Romney, though he did not exhibit with the Incorporated Society after 1772, appears to have remained a member until as late as 1789, for his name is in a printed list issued by the Society in that year. Mortimer was intimately connected with the Society for a long time and acted as Vice-President both to Paine and Stubbs; and the list of Presidents and Vice-Presidents also includes, in addition to those previously mentioned, Richard Brompton, Robert Carver, George Robertson, Charles Steuart,

LETTER FROM WRIGHT OF DERBY

William Marlow, Thomas Beach of Bath, James Turner, William Pether, and John Smart the miniature painter. Smart, according to John Landseer, supported the Society financially and lost heavily by its failure. Wright of Derby, who had been among the earlier supporters of the institution, returned to it after his quarrel with the Academy and contributed to the last exhibition of 1791. An amusing and characteristic letter from Wright, concerning the sale of one of his pictures, has been preserved among the Incorporated Society's papers. It is addressed to the Secretary:—

“DERBY, 6 June, 1774.

SIR

I shall be obliged if you will inform Mr. Martin that the picture of *The Earth Stopper* is to be delivered to Lord Hardwicke without the frame. The shabby price his Lordship is to pay for it will leave no room for his Lordship to expect the frame with it; but if he should say anything about it pray inform his Lordship that *The Earth Stopper* was exhibited in an old Italian moulding frame which I have had by me for many years and keep for the use of the exhibition, and on no account let him have it,

I am, your very humble servant
JOH. WRIGHT.”

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Royal Academy; Chambers its real founder; Description of the "Instrument"; Date of Gainsborough's Academicianship "not recorded"; The subordination of Reynolds; Royal control of the Academy; The Monarch as sleeping partner; Reynolds the first P.R.A.; Violently attacked by supporters of the Incorporated Society; Accused of "base apostasy"; His portrait of Lord Bute; No sittings from the King; "Mr. Ramsay is my painter"; Reynolds offers to resign; Northcote on his relations with George the Third; He accepts a knighthood; Dr. Johnson breaks the pledge; Reynolds and "The Club"; Goldsmith's fight with Evans; The first Academy exhibition little noticed; Lady Coventry and Lady Grosvenor; Greenwood on picture dealing; The Academy in 1770; "The Blue Boy"—Inspired by Titian?; William Seward's account of it; Death of Francis Cotes; Little known of his career; His house in Cavendish Square; His method in pastel; Anecdotes of Liotard; The first Academy dinner held in 1770; Letter from Chitqua the Chinese artist; His work in London.

IT is now necessary to return to the autumn of 1768 when in the struggle for the control of the Incorporated Society of Artists William Chambers was defeated by his fellow-architect, James Paine. Chambers was the last man to submit quietly to defeat and immediately after the election of October 18th he began to plan a new society that would be powerful enough to eclipse the body of which his rival was the real though not the nominal head. The desire to confound the schemes of Paine perhaps explains the intense interest shown by Chambers in the foundation of the Royal Academy, which owes its creation to his initiative and energy. He had been one of the tutors of George the Third when Prince of Wales and had no difficulty therefore in bringing his proposal before the notice of His Majesty.

The minutes of the Royal Academy commence with a summary of the statement made by Chambers at the first meeting of the members held on December 14th, 1768:—

"That some time towards the latter end of November, 1768, Mr. Chambers waited upon the King and informed him that many artists of reputation, together with himself, were very desirous of establishing a Society that should more effectually promote the arts of design than any other yet established, but they were sensible that their design could not be carried into execution without his Majesty's patronage, for which they had prevailed upon him to solicit."

FOUNDATION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

The King approved of the suggestion made by Chambers and asked for further particulars. These were briefly set forth in a memorial signed by twenty-two artists (but not by Reynolds or Gainsborough) upon the receipt of which His Majesty requested Chambers to draw up a complete plan of his scheme. This plan, known as the "Instrument," is the document by which the Royal Academy was brought into existence. It is written on both sides of two large sheets of paper, each about thirty inches by twenty, and its particulars provide for every detail of the institution as originally founded, even to the salaries of the porters. The details include the names of the thirty-six Academicians nominated by George the Third, but these names appear to have been added to the Instrument after it was signed by him on December 10th, 1768; as they include those of Hoare and Zoffany who were not nominated until December 11th, 1769. The list also contains the name of Gainsborough, the exact date of whose appointment as an Academician is unknown. In the old manuscript index of the minutes of the Royal Academy, compiled many years ago, the date of Gainsborough's appointment is marked "not recorded."

In the body of the Instrument the only name mentioned is that of Chambers himself, whom the King appointed Treasurer "that he might have a person in whom he places full confidence, in an office where his interest is concerned." It was this appointment, made in the Instrument of which he was the author, that placed Chambers in the position of ruler of the Royal Academy—not Reynolds, as the public were led to believe from his title of President.

Northcote says that Sir Joshua's influence, though commonly exerted with justice, was not always answerable to his desire. "I remember," he says, "to have heard him say that although he was nominally King of the Academy Sir William Chambers was the vice-roy over him; and at another time he said, 'Those who are of some importance everywhere else find themselves nobody when they come to the Academy.' " The real situation was occasionally revealed by well-informed, and perhaps inspired, writers in the newspapers, one of whom, commenting on the friction existing at the Academy in 1789, says:—

"The object of dissatisfaction and disgust at present seems to be Sir William Chambers, who as superintendent of the

whole is suffered to arrogate too much consequence, and to treat the rest of the body with too lordly a control."

Chambers may have abused his authority, but to the King it was important that his representative should have power in the Academy, as he was providing from his private purse the money that founded, and for a time supported, the institution. This gave him a control over its private affairs that has descended in turn to each of his successors and has never been relaxed. The position of the reigning sovereign in this connection is that of a man who holds the predominant interest in a firm founded by his ancestor in 1768. He is a sleeping partner in the Academy and one who draws no profits from it, but his power is none the less existent. Its most important business is submitted for approval to the sovereign, and it is notorious that in our own times the hanging of pictures in the summer exhibition has been affected by Royal commands.

Reynolds, who had taken no part in the negotiations with the King, was now asked to place himself at the head of the newly founded Academy. The offer was inevitable, for his great gifts as a painter, his dignified position in the world of art, and the fact that he had managed to keep himself outside all the quarrels of the Incorporated Society, marked him as the one man who could fill the post of leader with propriety and distinction. After some hesitation he accepted the Presidentship, and became immediately the object of attacks by disappointed members of the opposition camp who from his neutrality had ventured to believe that his sympathies were with them rather than with their opponents. According to the writer of the ablest and most violent of these attacks, Reynolds was offered the Presidentship of the Incorporated Society after the ejection of the sixteen original Directors, but excused himself on account of his deafness; and if Northcote can be relied upon he was in close touch with the Society, through Kirby, until a very short time before he accepted the leadership of the Academy.

The stories told in the histories of the Royal Academy and the biographies of Reynolds give a pleasant picture of the acclamations with which the election of the first President was received by his fellow-members. They suggest that the election was generally approved and that everything went smoothly, and this perhaps is true so far as the Academy and its followers were concerned. But the histories and biographies give little idea of the

AN ATTACK ON SIR JOSHUA

bitter resentment of the Incorporated Artists, who did not hesitate to state openly that they had been betrayed and that Chambers had bought Reynolds over by the promise of a knighthood. There are hints of the alleged betrayal in *The Conduct of the Royal Academicians* and in Sir Robert Strange's *Inquiry*, but the matter is put plainly in the attack I have already mentioned, which was contained in a letter in the *Middlesex Journal* signed "Fresnoy" and published in 1769, soon after Reynolds had received his title. It should be remembered, however, that the letter is written by a partisan, and that so far as we have knowledge of the circumstances there is no reason to believe that the conduct of Reynolds in connection with the Incorporated Society of Artists was anything but straightforward and honourable. "Fresnoy" says, addressing Reynolds:—

"The Royal Academy being entirely composed of the rebel followers of the Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain, the latter determined to dispute with them for the favour of the public in an exhibition. Each part being resolved to destroy or be destroyed, and each wanting a good General, the Incorporated Society had not the least doubt of having you. It was at this time, Sir Joshua, that you flung yourself like Mahomet between the one part and the other. The Society solicited you to take the chair as their President with that confidence with which your own word and honour had inspired them. You faintly pleaded an unfortunate defect in your head."

"Fresnoy" declares that the Incorporated Artists at first attributed to modesty the hesitation of Reynolds to place himself at their head, but that they were soon undeceived.

"You reasoned," he says, "with an adroitness as acute as it was profound. You well knew that if you were to remain with the Society of Artists you could not possibly gain anything more than a good name, and that there were the most flattering hopes that should you give a civil leer at the other you might gain a title. . . . This was the goal you were aiming at from first to last, Sir Joshua. You saw unmoved, unconcerned, the rebels of the Society of which you were the chief member forming themselves into a body under the auspices of the King, but as they paved a way—like that of Sin and Death from Hell—for you to follow, it was a matter of the utmost indifference to you who was damned for it so that you got

up to the heaven of a knighthood. Heaven itself cannot produce a more flagrant instance of base apostacy. . . . And now, Sir Joshua, let us inquire what very uncommon encouragement you have received from the Monarch whom the laws have taught you to call your King.

"Some time ago Lord Eglinton, at your request, solicited and persuaded Lord Bute to sit to you for a picture to hang in his new house in Piccadilly. He did sit to you and you never painted a finer picture in your life. The reverberation of its fame was too powerful not to enter the ears of the King, who begged Lord Eglinton to let him see it. No sooner had he seen this most striking resemblance of his greatest favourite but he insisted that Lord Eglinton should let him have it. His Lordship was extremely happy, and, courtier-like, had no other favour to ask of his Majesty but that he should sit to you, Sir Joshua, for a portrait of himself. And what did the King reply? 'Mr. Ramsay is my painter, My Lord.'"

The writer then endeavours to discover a reason for what he considers the self-degradation of Reynolds in accepting a title, and incidentally expresses his opinions of some of the new President's acquaintances, commencing with Kitty Fisher, that notorious lady of pleasure who was one of his favourite models:—

"Why should you have exchanged your honour for a title? . . . Have you received a frown from salacious Catherine, the tailor's maid, or is the affection of the fair creature alienated from you entirely since her elevation to matrimony—from you, alas! and many others? Have you lost any of your friends, that might induce you to fly into the toils of infamy? No, all your friends, your amiable friends, are still about you; and Catherine has sat to you in the most graceful, the most natural, attitudes, and indeed I must do you the justice to say that you have come as near the original as possible."

From Kitty Fisher he passes to the painter's male friends, in whom, says "Fresnoy" scornfully, he is indeed supremely blessed, including as they do Dr. Hawkesworth and "that parasite" Baretti.

"But the first, I think, is Dr. Johnson, alias Old Atlas, who groans about the city under a supposition that he bears the world on his shoulders. You, no doubt, Sir Joshua, have inexpressible pleasure in the company of so great a genius,

from a sympathy of feelings and equality of knowledge—‘At all that he laughs you laugh.’ Now there is a perfect mutuality in this for he has an undeserved pension and you a title; he has abused the King and the King has abused you—happy rogues to be so repaid! Nor is the M . . . y less blessed for he has hung you in the chains of knighthood and made him a slave. To be sure, Sir Joshua, Dr. Johnson is an astonishing creature for when he writes or speaks ’tis exactly like the prancing of a war horse. Next to him, Sir Joshua, is your friend Dr. Goldsmith. . . . I must compassionate the poor Doctor as a tyro, not having learned to write, but I daresay before he has finished his history he will finish himself.”

The comment on Goldsmith implies that the author of this attack questioned his literary skill, and perhaps shared the suspicions to which a more responsible writer, Dr. Birch, refers in a letter written four years earlier, in 1765. In it he says that the reading of *The Traveller* had induced him to buy the just-published volume of Goldsmith’s essays and that he had been greatly disappointed in finding gross and frequent defects of grammar in the work of the friend of the author of the dictionary and grammar of the English language.

“The essays, indeed,” he says, “are so inferior to the Doctor’s poem that some suspect the latter to have been corrected and improved by the hand of Sam Johnson, at whose levees Goldsmith is almost every day to be seen, where he bears the insolence and raillery of that cynical writer with the utmost patience, from a consciousness, it is imagined, of obligations to him as an author.”

The portrait of Lord Bute by Sir Joshua mentioned by “Fresnoy” is no doubt the full length painted about 1763, in which the Prime Minister is shown in the act of receiving some papers from his Secretary, Charles Jenkinson, afterwards Lord Liverpool. An entry in one of Reynolds’s account books quoted by Mr. Graves, “Dec. 7, 1763, Lord Bute and Mr. Jenkinson, paid by the King £210,” suggests that His Majesty took the portrait off Lord Eglinton’s hands. It remained in the Royal collection until 1785, when a writer in the *Morning Herald*, who had not forgotten or forgiven the detested Minister, announced joyfully that his portrait had been “expelled from the lumber-room of favourites” at the Palace, and was then at Sir Joshua’s house, standing in the dark passage leading to the picture gallery. The

portrait, which had been sent to Sir Joshua for renovation, was presented by the King to Lord Bute's son, Lord Mount Stuart.

Lady Holland, who saw it at Luton Hoo in 1808, declares that it was "grouped with malicious skill" by Reynolds. She says in her *Journal*:—

"The Prime Minister is represented with all the pomp and dignity of office, taking rather than receiving a bundle of papers which the Secretary, with a most submissive air, is holding in his hands. The story tells itself; the abject, fawning, sly Secretary, and the haughty great man. People say Sir Joshua Reynolds marked the characters so strongly in order to stamp the origin of a man whose sneaking qualities he foresaw would raise him to distinction. Lord Liverpool, I have been assured, offered frequently a very large sum to withdraw from the eye of the public this memorial."

The King, though he purchased Lord Bute's portrait from Reynolds, gave him no commissions, and this neglect, which was often the subject of comments in the Press, caused the painter considerable annoyance. He showed it only a few weeks after the foundation of the Royal Academy, as we know from a passage in a gossiping letter received by Garrick from his friend Sharp, who says in February, 1769:—

"The President, Reynolds, I am told, has decided to resign. The King sent to him and insisted on his continuing. Reynolds returned answer that he owed his Majesty the duty of a subject but no more, and that as his Majesty had never sat to him as he had to many others he decided to adhere to his resolution. The King then said he would sit to him; since then another of the artists has applied for a like honour."

A note in Sir Joshua's pocket-book, written on the 12th of February, 1769, "Dine at St. James's," probably refers to this incident and suggests that the King was making overtures to the painter. Another note, in the pocket-book for 1770, in July, "The King," may mean that George the Third made an appointment with Reynolds for a sitting in that year, but no portrait of this period is known to exist and it is unlikely that any was painted earlier than 1779. The portrait of 1779, when Reynolds painted both the King and Queen for the Royal Academy, was shown for the first time in 1780, in the Council Room at Somerset House, and Walpole who saw it there has written on the margin of his copy of *A Candid Review*, "This was the first time

the King had sat to Sir Joshua, tho' numberless times to other painters." The sittings of 1779 were given in May, when the *Morning Chronicle* announced that "Sir Joshua Reynolds attended his Majesty at the Queen's Palace (Buckingham House) and began to take off his Majesty's likeness in his Parliamentary robes. Another picture of his Majesty is likewise to be taken off in a military habit." Apparently the idea of painting the portrait of the King in uniform was abandoned, perhaps for the reason advanced many years afterwards by Sir Joshua's pupil, James Northcote.

That artist, in a conversation with a friend not long before his death, mentioned the portraits painted for the Royal Academy and declared that the King and Queen would not sit again to Sir Joshua because they were afraid of him.

"He executed his commission but was never employed by their Majesties again."

"Why not, Mr. Northcote?"

"Why not? Because he was a great man and a philosopher. He felt his own dignity and was not at all overawed in the Royal presence."

"You astonish me! I should have thought in the estimate I had formed in my own mind of Sir Joshua's manners that such amiable personages as the King and Queen would have delighted in his conversation. And have I not heard you say that he was courteous to every one, that his manners were so gracious that even a journeyman framemaker, sent by his master to take the measure for a picture and to receive orders for a frame, went away elevated in his own self-esteem from the gratification of the interview?"

"Even so," said Northcote. "Such a man one would be almost induced to think was born to be a King—but certainly not to be a courtier. Bless your soul, how artless you are! Can't you see that one of his native dignity was more likely to strike awe into the King and Queen, who were comparatively young and inexperienced, than for him to be overawed by them? The one was only King of a great nation; the other was the greatest painter in the world. Hence, the balance of greatness preponderating on the side of the subject, the King, sensibly conscious from the ease and self-dependence of manner of the painter which was the greater man of the two, looked at the Queen with an expression that intimated 'the

sooner we are relieved from the annoyance of these sittings so much the more agreeable'; and it was settled that they would never expose themselves again to a similar experience. I know that I am right. The King and Queen could not endure the presence of him; he was poison to their sight. . . . Do not suppose he was ignorant of the value of Royal favour. No—Reynolds had a thorough knowledge of the world. He would gladly have possessed it but the price would have cost *him* too much."

On April 22nd, 1769, the King bestowed a knighthood on the first President of the Royal Academy, to the joy of his friend Dr. Johnson, who broke on this occasion his self-imposed pledge of total abstinence. "After," he said, "ten years forbearance of every fluid except tea and sherbet, I drank a glass of wine to the health of Sir Joshua Reynolds on the evening of the day on which he was knighted."

The Doctor is thus quoted in some "Johnsoniana" published in a newspaper soon after his death, the writer of which, however, was mistaken in supposing that he had been an abstainer for ten years before 1769. The exact date of his final conversion (for he had had earlier periods of abstention) is not known, but it was probably in 1764, and may, I think, have been due to the example set him by the water-drinking Dr. Percy, afterwards Bishop of Dromore. In Johnson's *Meditations* he laments, on Good Friday, April 20th, 1764, his undue indulgence in wine; and in the summer of the same year he and Miss Williams, the blind lady to whom he gave shelter in his house for many years, spent some weeks in Northamptonshire with Percy, then Vicar of Easton Maudit. Johnson stayed at the vicarage from the 25th of June to the 18th of August, studying, and exploring the surrounding country with his host, and it could not have escaped him that in all that time Percy touched nothing intoxicant. It seems likely that Johnson gave up drinking wine during or soon after his visit to Easton Maudit, for when he went to Cambridge early in 1765 Dr. John Sharp, who met him there, remarks particularly his "large potations of tea."

An entry in the President's note-book on April 22nd, 1769, shows that he appreciated his title. Across the double page of the open book he has scrawled in large letters, "The King's Levee—Knighted at St. James's."

Five days afterwards "Sir Josh-u-ay," as his contemporaries

called him, celebrated the event by entertaining a few intimate friends to a dinner described by one of the guests, Dr. Percy, as "a Treat occasioned by his being Knighted." The list of those present is interesting:—"Sam. Johnson, Esq.; Edmd. Burke, Esq.; Mr. Chambers, Vinerian Prof.; Dr. Nugent; Mr. Langton; Mr. Jones, the great Linguist; Dr. Leland of Dublin, Author of the Life of Philip of Macedon; Dr. Hawkesworth; Dr. Percy." It is noticeable that Goldsmith was an absentee and that the guests included no artists. Sir Joshua was a solitary man in some respects—"an isolated being," Northcote calls him—and as far as we know he had no intimates among the members of his own craft, but still it is strange that the Royal Academy was unrepresented at the party of the 27th of April.

Nor does it seem that Sir Joshua ever proposed an artist for membership of "The Club," that famous institution founded by him, at whose weekly suppers great wits gathered at seven o'clock and coruscated "until a pretty late hour." At least that is the tradition handed down to us by Boswell, but the meetings at Sir Joshua's club were sometimes far from brilliant, as Dr. Percy, one of the members, reveals in entries in his diary. For example, in June, 1768—"In the evening I was at the Club, Mr. Chambers and myself there only"; and in March, 1772—"I was at the Club, nobody but Mr. Chamier and myself." No doubt there was more liveliness at a meeting a year later, on March 26th, 1773, when, says Dr. Percy—"Dr. Goldsmith came to us with a bloody face." He might have added, but does not, "and a pair of black eyes," for it was on the afternoon of this day that Goldsmith attempted to chastise the bookseller, Evans, only to be beaten himself. His comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, had just been performed for the first time at Covent Garden, and Goldsmith resented the criticism in the *London Packet*, which Evans published.

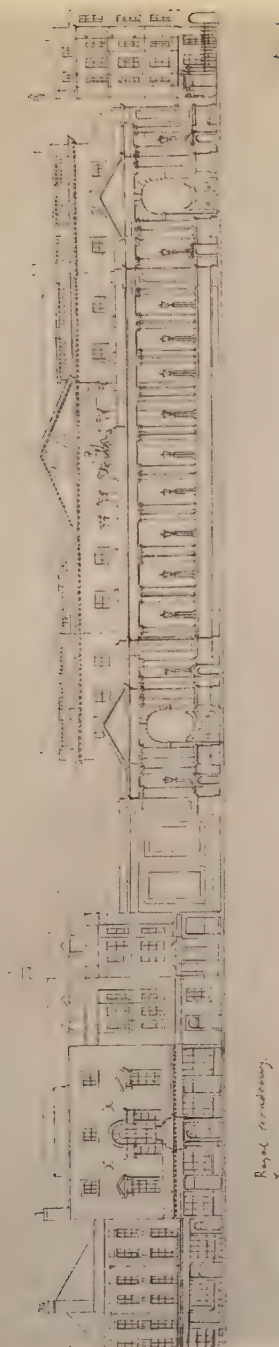
The authority for the black eyes is the *St. James's Chronicle*, which took the side of Evans and declared that Goldsmith had been in a brawl before, when he fought one of Jacob Tonson's printers. It declared too that the censures of the *London Packet* were well deserved. "Dr. Goldsmith was formerly a manager of a magazine; he indulged himself in that occupation with frequent sallies of malevolence, he sacrificed oftener to spleen and ill nature than to truth and candour. The Doctor ought not to be surprised that the writer of a newspaper should consider him as lawful game and treat him as he has treated others."

According to Dr. Percy, the author of *She Stoops to Conquer* was guilty of literary offences more serious than mere "sallies of malevolence." Dr. Percy, when writing to a friend a few years after the death of Goldsmith, said that he had earned many a guinea by allowing his name to appear on the title-pages of books he had not written.

On the 26th of April, 1769, the first exhibition of the Royal Academy was opened in Pall Mall, in what had once been Lambe's Auction Room. The pictures were viewed by "a very crowded and brilliant route of persons of the first position," but Sandby and Eaton, the historians of the Royal Academy, are wrong in stating that a banquet was given at the St. Alban's Tavern on the evening of the opening day. The banquet to which they refer, at which Mr. Vernon sang the song quoted by Sandby, was not on the 26th of April. It took place on the 2nd of January, 1769, immediately after the first General Assembly of the Academicians, at which Sir Joshua delivered his first Discourse. "Business being ended," says the writer of an account of the proceedings in the *Gazetteer*, "they adjourned to the St. Alban's Tavern, where an elegant entertainment was provided by the Academicians, and at which were present his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, the Marquis of Monthermer, Lord Nuneham, the Hon. Mr. Robinson, and others."

The first exhibition of the Royal Academy, which contained only a hundred and thirty-six works of art, was arranged by Paul Sandby, Penny and Barret. It was little noticed by the newspapers, although it contained portraits by Reynolds and Gainsborough, and contributions from Richard Wilson, Francis Cotes, Nathaniel Dance, Bartolozzi and other men of eminence.

The President's contributions included the exquisite *Portraits of Two Ladies Half-Length, Et in Arcadia Ego* (91). The ladies, Mrs. Crewe and Mrs. Bouverie, two of the most famous beauties of the day, are shown on Sir Joshua's canvas seated in a landscape, with Mrs. Crewe pointing out to her companion the inscription "Et in Arcadia Ego" carved on a memorial stone in the background. "Mrs. Crewe and Mrs. Bouverie moralizing at the tomb of Lady Coventry," writes Walpole in his catalogue against the title of this picture. His meaning is obscure, but the note may be a sarcastic reference to face painting. It is from one of Walpole's letters that we learn that the death of Lady Coventry was caused by the abuse of cosmetics and no doubt the two ladies



The South Side of Pall Mall, showing the original Royal Academy and Carlton House, 1796

painted by Sir Joshua indulged in a practice that at this time was almost universal among women of fashion, and by many carried to extremes.

There were but few who abstained, but among them, it is said, was Lady Grosvenor, whose full length by Gainsborough had been exhibited two years earlier. She was famous for the whiteness of her skin and the brilliance of her complexion, which, rival and envious beauties whispered, owed something to adventitious aids. But a writer who afterwards championed her in the *Morning Post* declared that her charms were all her own. "To Nature and to cold water alone," he said, "she is indebted for the clearness of her skin, added to the most perfect good humour and sweetness of temper."

Her temper, however sweet, must have been put to a severe test in this year of the exhibition of the *Portraits of Two Ladies Half-Length* by the discovery of her intrigue with the King's brother the Duke of Cumberland. Surprised with him at St. Albans by Lord Grosvenor's servants, and deserted instantly by her lover, she fled alone to London to consult Charles Yorke, then on the eve of his appointment to the Lord Chancellorship. A letter written by his brother James on the 30th of December, 1769, shows the straits to which the unhappy fugitive was reduced. James says of Charles Yorke:—"He has had a droll interview with young Lady Grosvenor, at Smith's the perfumer's in Bond Street, and *by her Ladyship's invitation*. She is, it seems, entirely discarded by her good Lord and has neither attendants, money or children. A detected rencontre in her way to town with a great personage is the immediate cause."

James Yorke, who mentions in the same letter that his brother's reception in Bond Street was "entertaining," appears to have found something amusing in this incident. But it was tragic enough to the woman concerned, who had asked for the appointment with the lawyer in the following note, written on Christmas Day, 1769:—

"SIR

The very distres'd and unhappy situation I am in must be my appollgy for troubling you with my unfortunate circumstances; the imprudencies which I have been led into, and I'm afraid ill advisers, has induced Lord Grosvenor to desert and threaten me with a prosecution, indeed apearances are too

strong in his favour but not so strong has he beleivs them, as I am in fact inocent.

I shall only add I have no friends or relations in town who can advise me wheather I ought to take any steps for my own defence, or prevent my beeing led into errors—therefore must beg for God's sake to see you at any hour most agreeable to you, which will oblige your unfortunate

Hble Servant

H. GROSVENOR.

Dec. 25th.

I am at Mr. Smith's, perfumer, in Bond Street.

I beg a line or verbal message by the bearer."

Lord Grosvenor obtained ten thousand pounds as damages from the Duke of Cumberland, but on account of his own numerous lapses from morality failed to divorce his wife. Both parties to the action were thus left in unsatisfactory positions, but if a correspondent of Lord Hardwicke may be trusted the result was regarded as a victory by Lady Henrietta Vernon, the mother of Lady Grosvenor. Lord Hardwicke's friend, writing from Richmond soon after the trial and retailing the latest gossip, says: "Lady Henrietta Vernon met Lady Cowper on the road three days ago and stopped her and asked her why she did not wish her joy, to which Lady Cowper said she did not know for what. 'O!' says Lady Henrietta, 'have you not heard?—my daughter is cleared.' Lady Grosvenor, I hear, has got a house at Barnes, and the Duke constantly visits her." Gainsborough's portrait of Lady Grosvenor was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1871, at the winter exhibition of Old Masters.

After the first exhibition of his newly founded Royal Academy in 1769 the King's enthusiasm for the arts cooled a little, except in connection with the work of one painter. He continued to patronize West, for whose *Departure of Regulus from Rome* he had paid four hundred guineas, but in 1770 he wrote to Lord Harcourt, then in Paris, and told him to proceed no farther in some negotiations that were then in progress for the purchase of a Vandyck. "I have," he said, "at least for the present, given up collecting pictures." But if George the Third had ceased to collect Old Masters the demand for them by his subjects remained unabated and the number of foreign canvases imported at this time was very large.

In the spring of 1770 a dealer named Goodall, of Marsham Street, Westminster, was exhibiting more than a thousand pictures lately consigned from abroad, including many attributed by him to eminent masters. All these, together with bronzes, carvings, miniatures, drawings, and objects of art generally, were displayed at his house in twenty rooms, and half a crown was charged for admission. A further proof of the fashion for collecting Old Masters that prevailed about the time of the establishment of the Royal Academy, is contained in a letter written by John Greenwood from London to Copley in Boston. Greenwood was himself a Boston man who came to London. He practised here for some time as a painter and engraver, and was elected a member of the Society of Artists. At the Society's gallery in 1764 he exhibited his first picture, *A View of Boston in New England*. Later he turned to picture dealing and finally became an auctioneer, a profession in which he gained well-deserved success and a reputation for probity. Writing to Copley in April, 1770, he congratulates his fellow-countryman upon the excellence of the pictures he has contributed to the London exhibitions, and commissions him to paint the portrait of his mother, whom he had not seen for some years, and who was then living at Marblehead, near Boston. Greenwood then speaks of his own affairs and his business as a picture dealer:—

“With regard to myself, since I left the Indies I’ve been visiting most of the Courts of Europe and admiring the thousand fine paintings that one finds distributed among them, though at present England bids fair to become the seat of the Arts and Artists. Almost everything that is not immoveable is brought here from every country, as none pays so generously for real good pictures as the English; though I must confess I think it begins somewhat to fall off. You will be surprised when I tell you that I have brought into London above fifteen hundred pictures and have had the pleasure of adorning some of the first cabinets in England, so that I have had but little time to exercise my pencil, but now and then have for amusement scraped several pieces that have not been disregarded. . . . We have several exhibitions coming on of old and new pictures; prints, drawings etc., which form Mr. Boydell’s collection. So that for six weeks to come you would hear of nothing here but the Virtu, just as children in Boston a fortnight before the election prate of nothing else.”

The portrait of Greenwood's mother was painted by Copley at Boston, and sent to London, where it was exhibited at the Society of Artists and afterwards hung in the auctioneer's house in Leicester Fields. It was seen and much admired by Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose house was only a few doors from that of Greenwood. Many years afterwards, when the American master had made a reputation in England, and was a Royal Academician, Sir Joshua asked to be allowed to look at it again. He mounted on a chair to see the portrait closely, and after a careful examination, shook his head. "Ah!" he said, "Copley can't paint like that now."

Greenwood in this letter claims to have collected abroad many pictures that afterwards adorned the first collections in England, but his authority as a connoisseur is considerably discounted by the eulogies he bestows on the work of Benjamin West, who, he tells Copley: "goes on painting like a Raphael, and really outdoes everything one could have expected. His compositions are noble, his design correct, and his colouring harmonious and pleasing; and a certain sweetness in his characters that must please every one that beholds them." Raphael is usually the master with whom West is compared, and not infrequently ranked, by his eighteenth-century panegyrists; but later these were easily outshone in extravagance of praise by John Galt, the artist's biographer. Speaking of West, Galt says in a passage that seems incredible as expressing the opinion of a man of intelligence:—

"As an artist he will stand in the front rank. His name will be classed with those of Michael Angelo and Raphael but he possessed little in common with either. As the former has been compared to Homer and the latter to Virgil, in Shakespeare we shall perhaps find the best likeness to the genius of Mr. West."

Our knowledge of the Academy exhibition of 1770 comes chiefly from the catalogue and the notes written by Walpole. It is almost ignored by all the contemporary newspapers that I have seen, although in Walpole's opinion it was of more than average excellence. "At this exhibition," he says, "were some very fine things, and fewer bad ones than in any of the preceding." Among the fine things were some of Sir Joshua's portraits, and the picture by Zoffany of a scene from *The Alchemist*, which Sir Joshua bought from the painter and Northcote describes wrongly

as the first picture exhibited by Zoffany in London. Its popularity was remarkable. Sir Joshua, as we know, resold *The Alchemist* to Lord Carlisle at a profit, which he handed over to Zoffany; and a writer of 1770 tells us that Lord Ossory wanted the picture so much that he would willingly have given fifty guineas more for it than the sum paid by Lord Carlisle.

It is just possible that one of the 1770 pictures was Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*, which some think Mary Moser referred to when writing about the Academy of this year to Fuseli, then in Rome. "Gainsborough," she said, "is beyond himself in a portrait of a gentleman in a Vandyck habit," and thus it has been conjectured that *The Blue Boy* was No. 85, *Portrait of a Young Gentleman*. But it is all purely guesswork and if No. 85 was really *The Blue Boy* it was passed unremarked in the exhibition by Walpole, who notes and praises in his catalogue No. 86, Gainsborough's portrait of Garrick. We have no precise knowledge of the early history of *The Blue Boy* or of whom it represents, for it was unmentioned by any writer on Gainsborough until ten years after his death, when, in 1798, William Jackson speaks of it as "perhaps his best portrait." In 1808 Edward Edwards mentions it as in the possession of Hoppner, and says it is a portrait of Jonathan Buttall, the son of an ironmonger of Soho. This is all that was known of *The Blue Boy* until I found in the *European Magazine* of August, 1798, a note praising the picture and explaining how it came to be painted.

"Gainsborough had seen a portrait of a boy by Titian for the first time, and having found a model that pleased him, he set to work with all the enthusiasm of his genius. 'I am proud,' he said, 'of being in the same profession with Titian, and was resolved to attempt something like him.'"

Looking at the picture it is clear that Gainsborough, if impressed for the moment by Titian, could not throw off his old allegiance to Vandyck. But leaving this out of the question there may be some truth in the story of the origin of *The Blue Boy* told in the *European Magazine*, although I did not attach much importance to it when I quoted it in 1915 in my life of Gainsborough. It was anonymous and there was nothing to show that it was backed by any authority, but I have since discovered that the writer of the note was William Seward, the friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Johnson, a frequent guest at the Royal Academy dinners; and, as Boswell says, "a man well known to a

numerous and valuable acquaintance for his literature, love of the fine arts, and social virtues."

I do not know whether Seward was acquainted with Gainsborough, but he was deeply interested in his work and was the author of notes about him that have been used by the painter's biographers. The paragraph in the *European Magazine* was written immediately after he had read *The Four Ages*, the book by William Jackson that contains the mention of *The Blue Boy* to which I have referred. Seward had a passion for collecting information about the eminent persons of his time, and Boswell has acknowledged his obligations to him for some of the biographical details in the life of Johnson. It is through Seward that we know of Gainsborough's travels in Flanders, and to him also we owe a well-known story of Sir Joshua's admiration for his rival's skill for which Northcote has been given the credit. Seward, writing in 1797, says:—

"Sir Joshua Reynolds declared of Gainsborough that he could copy Vandyck so exquisitely that at a certain distance he could not distinguish between the copy and the original. His manner of painting was his own and produced great force and effect. Sir Joshua was one day examining with attention a picture of his for a great while together, and at last exclaimed, 'I cannot make out how he produces his effect.'"

Northcote, when compiling his life of Sir Joshua, took this anecdote and used it as his own, and as Northcote's it has been quoted many times by later writers.

Unless *The Blue Boy* was at the Academy in 1770, and of this there is no evidence, it was not shown publicly until 1814, when it was lent for exhibition at the British Institution by Lord Grosvenor. When, or from whom, he acquired the picture is uncertain. Anderton, in one of his manuscript notes on Gainsborough, says that it was sold after Hoppner's death for fifty guineas and that it was in Lord de Tabley's collection before it passed into that of Lord Grosvenor. But John Young, the engraver, who as early as 1821 catalogued the Grosvenor House pictures, and was perhaps informed by their owner, states that *The Blue Boy* was bought from Hoppner. "This picture," he says, "was purchased at Mr. Buttall's sale, by Mr. Nesbitt; afterwards it became the property of Mr. Hoppner, who disputed (disposed?) of it to Earl Grosvenor."

The sale of Jonathan Buttall's property was in December,

1796, and Young's statement that *The Blue Boy* changed hands on that occasion is supported by Joseph Farington, who, writing in his *Diary* on December 15th, 1796, says that at Buttall's sale Gainsborough's portrait of a boy in a blue Vandyck dress was sold, and that it fetched thirty-five guineas. In a later entry he mentions Nesbitt as the buyer. Assuming that this was the picture so long at Grosvenor House the price seems preposterous, judged by the £160,000 that the Duke of Westminster is said to have received for it from Sir Joseph Duveen. But the price was fair for the time at which it was sold, for in 1796 Gainsborough's figure painting was already out of fashion. Thirty-five guineas for *The Blue Boy* compares favourably with the thirty-two guineas which the full length of "Perdita" Robinson, now in the Wallace Collection, realized at auction in 1785 when Gainsborough was at the height of his popularity. Young's statement about the picture becoming the property of Hoppner is also corroborated by Farington in a note on the sale of John Nesbitt's pictures in 1802. It was then, he says, that Hoppner acquired *The Blue Boy*, which Edwards mentions as still in his possession about 1806.

John Nesbitt's sale in 1802 was caused by his bankruptcy. Once a rich City merchant and a man of fashion, he was so deeply in debt in 1802 that the contents of his house, No. 20 Grafton Street (for which he paid £200 a year), were sold, as well as his country seat at Keston, near Bromley, the grounds of which adjoined those of Holwood House, the residence of Pitt. Nesbitt had three Gainsboroughs, one a landscape with a cottage and figures. This picture, which cannot now be identified, fetched eighty guineas at the sale. *The Blue Boy* realized only sixty-five guineas, and Gainsborough's portrait of Arnold Nesbitt, one guinea. Arnold Nesbitt, who was the uncle of John Nesbitt, married the sister of Johnson's friend, Henry Thrale, the brewer.

The Royal Academy exhibition of 1770, in which *The Blue Boy* is supposed to have been shown, contained no fewer than eleven portraits by Francis Cotes, one of the most successful of Gainsborough's rivals. Of Cotes, who died in the same year, soon after the close of the exhibition, the biographies tell us less than of any other painter of his rank and period, and from Edwards, the principal authority, we learn little except that he was the son of a London apothecary and a pupil of George Knapton.

Born in 1725, two years after Sir Joshua and two years before Gainsborough, he soon began to make a reputation, and was only twenty-five when his portrait of Miss Gunning was the subject of some published verses that were highly eulogistic alike of the lady and the painter. Cotes was on intimate terms with Thomas and Paul Sandby, and Paul's wife, who was a beautiful young woman, was the original of one of his first exhibited works, *Emma, or the Nutbrown Maid* (13), shown at the Society of Artists in 1760. In the following year he exhibited the half length of Paul Sandby, seen in the act of sketching from a window, now at the National Gallery; and Mrs. Sandby was again his model for the *Emma, a whole length* (16) hung at the Society of Artists in 1765. I have already referred, in Chapter Thirteen, to his alleged attempts to monopolize the best positions for his pictures at these exhibitions, attempts, it is said, that helped to break up the Society; but Cotes if selfish in this respect could not have been so in others, for Mary Moser when announcing his death declared that he was not more lamented as an artist than as a friend to the distressed.

Walpole compared Cotes' work in crayons with that of Rosalba; and Hogarth—according to Edwards—ranked his portraits before those of Reynolds. Hogarth, no doubt, was jealous of Reynolds, but other contemporaries also thought highly of Cotes, who appears to have been happy, as a rule, in obtaining a likeness. In 1764, the year of Hogarth's death, the critic of the *Public Advertiser* says of Cotes' contributions to the exhibition at Spring Gardens: "His portraits may justly vie with those of Reynolds, and, greatly to his honour be it said, he generally preserves a beautiful correctness in his pictures, which the latter master too often neglects."

Cotes, who was one of the three or four artists most intimately connected with the foundation of the Royal Academy, was the first to die of its original members. He was living in a fine house on the south side of Cavendish Square, and full of prosperity, when he was cut off in his prime at forty-five, apparently before the building of the new painting room he had designed for himself, of which Mr. Humphry Ward had the plans and elevation. There is no mention of such a building in the advertisement of the sale of the house in Cavendish Square the year after his death. It is described only as "a large and commodious residence, with an elegant suite of five rooms on the first floor, and

coach houses and stabling” for all of which the tenant of those happy days paid only a hundred guineas a year. Sir Frederick Eaton, who says that Cotes built the house, must have been misinformed, as the advertisement states that he held it on a lease of twenty-one years from Midsummer, 1763. Langford, the auctioneer who advertised the house, also disposed of the very large collection of drawings and prints formed by the artist, the sale of which occupied several evenings; and of his pictures, furniture, rare books, and “most elegant wrought and chased plate.”

That Cotes had a high opinion of the skill of his master, is shown by a reference to Knapton in an essay on crayon, or pastel, painting, found among his papers after his death. His object in writing the essay is unknown, but it is valuable as an expression of his views on the technicalities of a favourite branch of his art and the achievements of its professors. Cotes says of pastel painting:—

“Crayon pictures are in their nature more delicate and consequently more liable to injury than almost any other kind of painting. They are usually executed upon a paper ground pasted over the finest linen, and are often painted upon blue; but most commonly upon paper prepared with a size ground rendered of a middle tint, and sometimes upon paper perfectly white. It must not be concluded that because crayon pictures are easily injured that they cannot with care be preserved a great length of time, nay, for many centuries, but it will always be necessary to keep them with attention, and above all things to take care that they are not left in damp rooms, or in moist places, for the paste which is used in preparing the grounds will inevitably produce a mildew and blacks, and the darkest colours be covered with spots.

“All the light tints of English crayons are perfectly safe and durable, and pictures of this description are to be seen that have been painted for more than forty years and which have been exposed to the climates of the East and West Indies, and are notwithstanding in no respect decayed. It must always be remembered that as crayon pictures are dry, and have of course a powdery surface, they never should be left uncovered with a glass, because whatever dust settles upon them cannot be blown off or removed in any other manner. Crayon pictures when finely painted are superlatively beautiful, and decorative in a very high degree in apartments that are not too large;

for, having their surface dry they partake in appearance of the effect of fresco, and by candlelight are luminous and beautiful beyond all other pictures.

"The finest examples that are known in this branch of painting are the pictures by the Caval. Mengs in the Gallery at Dresden; the Seasons and other beautiful paintings by Rosalba; and certain portraits by Liotard, which are dispersed and to be found all over Europe as he painted in almost every country. Perhaps to these may be added a few of my late master's portraits; and finally, if it will not be deemed too much presumption, my father's portrait and Mr. Knapton's, her Majesty with the Princess Royal sleeping, Mrs. Child, Miss Jones, Miss Wilton and a few other portraits by myself.

"Whatever spots appear in the blacks and darkest colours are easily removed with care by the point of a penknife; and if any spots should arise upon the light parts of the flesh or other places they should in like manner be scraped off and repainted in, a spot at a time, exactly corresponding with the surrounding tints till all the decayed parts are restored; which has often been done with admirable effect."

Cotes is represented in the Diploma Gallery at the Royal Academy by a portrait of his father, which is probably the pastel that he places first in the list of his works.

Liotard, the Swiss artist whom Cotes mentions with Mengs and Rosalba, was the man of whom Reynolds said:—"his pictures are just what ladies do when they paint for their amusement." It is an unjust criticism, for Liotard was, as Cotes implies, a pastellist of ability. He was obtaining very high prices for his portraits in the year Reynolds returned to London, and is said to have had a strong objection to the use of cosmetics. The author of an essay of 1755 on *Self-Painters Condemned* says that he had lately "refused a fine woman to draw her picture, alleging that he never copied any works but his own and God Almighty's." Nevertheless he had crowds of sitters, and a few years later an indignant English artist complained that in one of his visits to this country he had executed commissions to the value of between six and seven thousand pounds:—"when at the same time we had a Cotes who in crayon painting infinitely excelled him."

He made himself conspicuous always by wearing Eastern robes and a long beard, until he was about seventy, when he married. His bride then stipulated that he should in future wear

ordinary clothes and cut off his beard, which Liotard preserved in a casket of peculiar shape made for the purpose. Joseph Moser, who met him in London in 1772, describes him as a simple and unassuming man, and says that his beard "was of a silvery hue, and reached below his girdle; his drapery was completely Oriental." In a letter written from Florence in 1755 Lord Cork expresses his belief that to the Oriental draperies the portrait painter owed much of his large connection. Lord Cork, who wrote soon after visiting the Uffizi, the well-known gallery of artists' portraits, says:—"I smiled to see Liotard there in his Turkish dress, which has imposed upon many English Christians who thought him an excellent painter because he appeared to be a Turk. He has exhibited himself in crayons, and in remarkable disproportion."

In 1754, when he lodged in Golden Square at the sign of the Two Yellow Lamps, he held an exhibition of his work, including:—"the Three Graces, drawn at Rome by Mr. Liotard, after the Antique Marble Groupe in the Prince Borghese's Villa, and Coloured after the Life." Liotard, who combined painting with dealing, was advertising a collection of Old Masters for sale at Great Marlborough Street, in 1773.

Sir Frederick Eaton says in his history of the Royal Academy that the first official dinner in its own rooms was given at Old Somerset House in 1771, but this statement, made probably on the authority of John Forster, is inaccurate. It was on April 23rd, 1770, that the first dinner was given, in the gallery in Pall Mall where the pictures had just been arranged for the annual exhibition, which was opened on April 24th. The entertainment is described in contemporary accounts as "grand" and "elegant," and the guests included the Duke of Devonshire, the Earl of Carlisle, Lord Grosvenor, Lord Bessborough, Lord Nuneham, Mr. Horace Walpole, Mr. David Garrick, and Mr. Chitqua.

The last-named was a Chinese artist who had been working in England for some time, and to whom the King had given several commissions for small modelled portraits, in the execution of which he excelled. Of Chitqua, who was for a year or two the fashion in London, an excellent description is given by Bentley, the partner of Josiah Wedgwood, in a letter to that famous potter. Bentley says, writing from London in November, 1769:—

"We are every day finding out some ingenious man or

curious piece of workmanship, all which we endeavour to make subservient to the improvement of our taste or the perfection of our manufacture. I have not time to name the things we have seen; but one great curiosity I cannot omit. I mean a Chinese portrait modeller, lately arrived from Canton, one of those artists who make the Mandarin figures that are brought to England, a pair of which you may remember to have seen at Mr. Walley's shop.

"He intends to stay here some years, is in the Chinese dress, makes portraits (small busts in clay, which he colours), and produces very striking likenesses with great expedition. I have paid him three visits and had a good deal of conversation with him; for he speaks some English and is a goodnatured, sensible man, very mild in his temper and gentle in his motions. His dresses are chiefly of satin and I have seen him in crimson and in black. The India figures upon the fans are very just resemblances of the originals. His complexion is very swarthy, the eyelashes almost always in motion. His arms are very slender like those of a delicate woman, and his fingers very long; all his limbs extremely supple, his long hair is cut off before and he has a long tail hanging down to the bottom of his back. He has been with the King and Queen, who were much pleased with him, and he is to take the portraits of the Royal Infantry. He has ten guineas a piece for his little portraits, which are very small."

Chitqua not only spoke but wrote English, and a letter by him exists, written in a clear, legible hand but quaintly expressed. It is addressed to three ladies, then at Oxford, whose friends had endeavoured to find accommodation for him on an Indiaman going to China:—

"The two Wife-Women and the Single-woman Chin Chin Chitqua the China gentleman—and what time they quiere flirt those nice things truly never can forget for him. Some time he make voyage to Oxford, Christchurch will then open his gates and make Chitqua so welcome he no more tinkee go Canton again. There he find much bisn as he so well savee Art of Modelling Heads, thing much wanted among Mandarinmen of that place. Once more tankee fine present, Adios."

The nature of the present they made to the artist is not recorded, but the nice things he gave to them were "very handsome

fans that flop of themselves," to use the words of one of the recipients.

The Chinese modeller remained in London for more than a year after the dinner in Pall Mall, and in the spring of 1771 paid a visit to the schools of the Royal Academy, then recently established at Old Somerset House, "where he not only met with a polite reception but had the honour to have his portrait introduced by Mr. Zoffany into a capital picture of the members of that noble institution, which that eminent artist is executing for a great personage." The picture into which Chitqua's portrait was introduced was *The Life School in the Royal Academy*, which Zoffany was then painting for the King. It was painted by artificial light, and, according to Walpole, without any preliminary sketch.

"Zoffany," he says, "made no draws for it, but clapt in the artists as they came to him, and yet all the attitudes are easy and natural and most of the likenesses are strong." In this interesting picture, now in the Royal collection, Chitqua is seen in the background, peeping over the shoulders of Benjamin West and Jeremiah Meyer. Soon after sitting to Zoffany, Chitqua made arrangements to return to China by the *Grenville* East Indiaman. He had made friends as well as money in England, and no doubt would have carried away nothing but pleasurable impressions of the country had it not been for the superstition and brutality of the crew of the ship in which he had taken his passage. When, in his Chinese attire, he went on board at Gravesend, he found that the sailors looked upon him as a passenger likely to bring ill luck to the ship, and their threats so terrified the artist that he begged the carpenter, in case he was killed, to make a coffin in order that his body could be taken ashore. In his country, he said, it was not lawful to be buried in the water.

At length, the captain, seeing his distress and dreading also that his crew might mutiny if he remained on board, offered to set him on shore with the pilot, who would accompany him in the coach to London. This offer Chitqua accepted gratefully, but in London fresh troubles awaited him. He wished to return to his old lodgings, but in his state of terror he had forgotten, or could not explain intelligibly, where they were situated. A mob soon gathered round the coach and began to abuse the pilot for having, as it was thought, kidnapped a foreigner, but at this moment a gentleman, passing by, recognized Chitqua and

conducted him to the house in Arundel Street, Strand, for which he was seeking. He wisely adopted European clothing before seeking another ship.

Chitqua was represented by a bust at the Academy exhibition of 1770, soon after the close of which the first election of Associates, other than engravers, took place. There were seventeen candidates for ten places. Those elected were Edward Burch and Richard Cosway, with twenty votes each; Edmund Garvey, William Pars and Edward Stevens, eighteen each; George James and Elias Martin, seventeen each; James Wyatt, sixteen; John Bacon, thirteen; and Michael Angelo Rooker, thirteen. The unsuccessful candidates on this occasion included Thomas Banks the sculptor, who had eleven supporters. The two women Academicians, Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser, both recorded their votes, in each case by letter.



The River Front of Old Somerset House
From a Water Colour by Paul Sandby, R.A.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Old Somerset House; The King allots some of its rooms to the Royal Academy for school and offices; Opening of the school in 1771; Inspection of the older portion of Somerset House by Sir William Chambers; The dust of ages; Ruined furniture and tattered hangings; The Somerset House tapestries; Richard Wilson, R.A., as Librarian; "Don't paw the leaves, Sirrah"; Dissection of criminals before the Academy students; "Smugglerius"; Some of the earlier students; Romney's pupil, Daniel Gardner; His method in crayons; Lay-figures; The Academicians buy one for the school; Gainsborough's lay-figure "with brass-work joints"; Peters brings one from Paris "equal to the Venus de Medici"; Toms the drapery painter; Attempts to commit suicide; Did Gainsborough employ drapery painters?; Sir Joshua's assistants; His arrangements with sitters; Rates of remuneration of models; The female nude models and the Royal Family; Amazing resolution of the Academicians; West's "Death of General Wolfe"; Lord Chatham's opinion of it; Performance by Garrick at the Academy exhibition; Low standard of the work at the earlier Academies; Barry's "Adam and Eve."

WHEN Chitqua sat to Zoffany in the spring of 1771 the Life School of the Royal Academy at Old Somerset House had been open but a few months. The ancient Palace, originally built for that powerful Duke of Somerset known in history as the Protector, and afterwards the residence in succession of several Queens, had been the scene of entertainments on a magnificent scale during the Stuart period. But the glories of Somerset House passed away with the flight of James the Second, and as his successors had made little use of the Palace, George the Third decided that accommodation should be found in some of its rooms for the Royal Academy. In the summer of 1770 the surveyors of the Board of Works inspected what were known as the Royal apartments and at once set their men to repair them and to make such alterations as were necessary.

Everything was finished by the end of the year, when Moser, the first Keeper, took possession of the rooms that had been prepared for his residence. On the evening of January 14th, 1771, the School, described as "the most superb of any in the world and the best stocked with casts after the antique," was opened with due state and ceremony in the presence of the Academicians and Associates, and a gathering of fashionable people that included the King's brother, the Duke of Cumberland. "Sir Joshua Reynolds took the lecturer's chair for a few minutes to expatiate on

the indulgence his Majesty has shown to the arts by conferring on them such honour in presenting the Academy with apartments in a Royal Palace. Afterwards Mr. Sandby, Professor of Architecture, read his address."

The apartments allotted to the Academy were in that part of Somerset House which in the preceding century had been added to the original building by Inigo Jones. The older portion, full of memories of the departed Stuarts and still littered with the remains of furniture and decorations of other days, had long been shut up when the Royal Academy was first lodged at Somerset House and remained so for several years, until Sir William Chambers surveyed the Palace previous to its demolition.

We owe to Joseph Moser, who was present on the occasion, a curious description (published in the *European Magazine*) of the exploration of the ancient rooms by Chambers. Joseph Moser, whom I have already mentioned in connection with the St. Martin's Lane Academy, was a nephew of the first Keeper of the Royal Academy. Trained as an artist, he was an exhibitor at the Royal Academy and a candidate for the A.R.A., but abandoned the practice of painting after his marriage, and died a police magistrate. His uncle was living in the Academy apartments at Old Somerset House when Chambers made his inspection, and from the Keeper's drawing-room, which had been one of the Royal bedchambers, the older part of the Palace was entered through large folding doors that had not been opened for many years. These doors, which divided the architecture of Inigo Jones from that of his Italian predecessors, led into a long gallery on the first floor of the building which occupied one side of the water-garden; a gallery lined with panelled oak, the mouldings of which were touched with gold, and a stuccoed ceiling from which still hung the chains that had supported the chandeliers. This gallery, once a ball-room, was filled with an accumulation of old furniture of many styles and periods; the remains of a throne with its canopy of state; the curtains for an audience chamber, faded from crimson to a dull olive and robbed long ago of their golden lace and fringes; broken chairs, and dilapidated couches.

"Treading," says Moser, "in dust that had been for ages accumulating, we passed through this collection of ruined furniture to the suite of apartments which formed the other side of the angle and fronted the Thames. In these rooms, which had been adorned in a style of splendour and magnifi-

cence that was creditable to the taste of Edward the Sixth, part of the ancient furniture remained and indeed from the stability of its materials and construction might have remained for centuries had proper attention been paid to its preservation. The audience chamber had been hung with silk, now in tatters, as were the curtains, gilt leather covers, and painted screens. There were in this, and in a much longer room, a number of articles which had been removed from other apartments, and the same confusion and neglect were evident. Some of the sconces, though reversed, were still against the hangings, and I remember that one of the brass gilt chandeliers still hung from the ceiling.

“Passing through these rooms, which had once been the regions of splendour and festivity, of luxury and hospitality, we arrived at some doors that were opened with difficulty, but gave access to a room the sight of which repaid the trouble incurred. This apartment was upon the first floor of a small pile that formed a kind of tower at the end of the old buildings, the internal part of which was unquestionably the work of Inigo Jones. It was known to have been used as a breakfast or dressing room by Catherine of Braganza, Queen of Charles the Second, who lived and kept her Court in this Palace for many years. This apartment had more the appearance of a small temple than a room; it was of octagonal form and the ceiling rose in a dome from a beautiful cornice. There was such an elegant simplicity in the architecture that Sir William Chambers exceedingly regretted the necessity for its destruction.”

Moser remarks the beauty of the tapestry that adorned the room used as the library of the Royal Academy, and this may have been preserved when the Palace was dismantled. But some of the tapestries from Old Somerset House were sold to brokers for what must have been absurd prices. Several were bought by a man named Walker, who acquired among other pieces a large representation of the story of Haman and Mordecai “expressed in the habits of the Fifteenth or Sixteenth century” and bearing an inscription of a dozen lines in old French. This panel, fifteen to twenty feet in length and ten in breadth, was exposed for sale at Walker’s shop in Harp Alley, where the price set upon it was a guinea and a half.

In this ancient riverside Palace, bordered with a spacious garden

shaded with trees, the students of the Royal Academy worked for several years. Old Somerset House was the object of one of the earliest pilgrimages made by Copley when he arrived in London from America. He says in a letter to his half-brother Pelham that after accompanying Benjamin West to see Sir Joshua's house and pictures in Leicester Fields:—"I had the superlative pleasure of visiting the Royal Academy, where the students had a naked model from which they were drawing. The front of this palace, designed by Inigo Jones, is very magnificent." A description of the school written by John Deare the sculptor, in his student days, shows that space was not wanting at Old Somerset House:—

"There is one large room for the Plaster Academy; one for the Life, where two men sit two hours each night by turns every week; a large room in which lectures are given every Monday night, by Dr. Hunter on Anatomy, Wale on Perspective, Sir Joshua Reynolds on Painting, and Thomas Sandby on Architecture; and among many other apartments there is a choice Library. The plaster figures are placed on pedestals that run on castors."

Deare, who was probably a new student when he wrote this, was mistaken in thinking that Sir Joshua took his turn on Mondays in delivering lectures to the students; and the "choice Library" he mentions was in reality a very poor affair, and remained so long after the foundation of the Royal Academy. Henry Angelo gives in his memoirs a glimpse of the Library at Old Somerset House, and of its distinguished custodian Richard Wilson the landscape painter, who, gruff and dictatorial to the students, looked most carefully after the books and prints placed in his charge. Angelo says that Rowlandson the caricaturist, and John Bannister, who worked at the Academy schools before he became an actor, were students together. They were frolicsome youths, and imitated and caricatured Wilson, who kept a strict eye upon them when they patronized the Library. Bannister, talking long afterwards to Sir George Beaumont about Wilson, said, "I have him now before me," and then walking round the table, his hands behind him, he acted Wilson to the life:—

"The Librarian's voice was no less gruff than his manner. Wilson, hobbling round the library table and suddenly stopping. 'What are you about, Sir? What are you doing?'

"'I am sketching, Sir.' 'Sketching! Take your hands off the book, boy.' 'And what are you about?' (addressing another).

'Drawing from this print.' 'Drawing! Don't paw the leaves, Sirrah. You'll spoil the book. What—have you got eyes in your fingers, boy?' "

Dr. William Hunter's lectures on anatomy were strong features of the instruction at Old Somerset House, and bodies of criminals who had been executed were from time to time allotted to the Royal Academy for purposes of demonstration. Some of the actual dissection appears to have taken place at Surgeons' Hall. Deare, writing when he was only sixteen, to his father in the country, says he has been to see two men hanged and afterwards witnessed the partial dissection of one of them at Surgeons' Hall. The muscular development of the second man was so remarkable that Hunter declined to dissect the body, saying that it was worth preserving. It was therefore carried to the Academy schools, where Carlini the sculptor undertook to make a cast from it. The body, which was that of a smuggler, was placed in the attitude of the Dying Gladiator, and Carlini's cast, known always to the students as "Smugglerius," remained in the schools for many years afterwards.

The earlier students at Old Somerset House included Richard Cosway, Philip Reinagle, John Flaxman, Joseph Farington, Richard Hurlstone, William Beechey, Gainsborough Dupont, John Hoppner, John Keyse Sherwin, Edward Edwards, Biagio Rebecca, Joseph Strutt, John Russell, William Blake, William Singleton, John Bacon, Thomas Banks, James Northcote and Daniel Gardner. The last named, a portrait painter whose work has gained in appreciation in our time, was born in Cumberland and was in his youth the pupil of Romney. Both the Romney and the Gardner families lived in Kendal and Mrs. Gardner, the mother of the Academy student, was one of the first to recognize and encourage the genius of Romney. A study by him of Mrs. Gardner is said to have been his earliest attempt at portraiture. Daniel Gardner won a silver medal at the Academy schools in 1771, and in the same year was an unsuccessful competitor for the gold medal for the best historical painting, which was awarded on this occasion to William Bell.

He contributed a drawing to the Academy exhibition of 1771, *A Portrait of an Old Man*, but after this his name does not appear in the catalogue, although he lived and worked until the early years of the nineteenth century. The reason of this abstention is unknown, but it may be that Gardner in refraining from

exhibiting was influenced by the example of his teacher Romney who after 1772 showed no work at any gallery. Daniel Gardner married a sister of Francis Haward, A.R.A., the engraver of Sir Joshua's portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse. Mrs. Siddons gave Gardner sittings for a portrait in 1783-4.

Gardner produced some of his work by an uncommon method. Not long after his death a writer on the technicalities of painting, when speaking of the mediums used by the artists of the time, says:—

“Brandy, or spirits of wine, mixed with crayons scraped to dust with a knife, make drawings that look a great deal more like oil coloured pictures than those made with water colours. Gardner the painter made very brilliant, forcible pictures by this method, which is now much neglected and but little known.”

That the Academicians, backed by the King's purse, spared no expense in the equipment of their new schools, is shown by their purchase in 1771 of a lay-figure on which drapery could be arranged for the students to paint. We have seen that in the preceding year the Incorporated Society voted twenty pounds to buy a lay-figure for their school in Maiden Lane, but the Academicians when commissioning a man named Addison to make their figure gave “about eighty pounds” as a limit of price. When Addison delivered it at Old Somerset House he demanded a hundred pounds for his work and it was only after long hesitation that he agreed to accept ninety. Even this seems a very high price when the relative value of money in those days is considered and the small sums that second-hand figures realized, although from the studios of famous artists. Gainsborough's best lay-figure, for example, “most ingeniously constructed with brass-work joints” was sold after the death of his widow for three pounds.

If worth ninety pounds the Academy figure must have been as superlative an example as the one which William Peters, R.A., brought from Paris later in the eighteenth century. The French had then, as now, a high reputation for the manufacture of artists' materials and equipment; and they are praised by an enthusiastic writer who, having just seen the latest acquisition of Peters, declares that his Parisian lay-figure “modelled with the most accurate symmetry and capable of every varied gesture, is equal to the lovely proportions of the Venus de Medici.” If not

quite equal to the Venus the figure was no doubt a fine one, and was probably made by Huot, a Parisian craftsman who had a reputation for work of this kind. Thirty-five years after Peters obtained his lay-figure, Etty ordered one from Huot, then "as antique as he is unique," so old in fact that Etty was afraid he would die before the commission was executed. Huot, whom he believed to be the only man who could make a lay-figure, had no other assistant but his wife, and Etty describes as "appalling" his price of forty-eight pounds, although this was little more than half the sum paid by the Academicians to Addison.

The lay-figure upon which the silks and satins of some of the most beautiful of eighteenth-century women were from time to time disposed by Peter Toms, R.A., was designed and made by that artist himself; and after his death was used by John Russell, R.A., the pastellist whose work is now so much in favour with collectors. Toms valued his lay-figure highly, and with good reason. It was indispensable to him, for he was the Vanaken of his period and was long the principal drapery painter for Cotes; he also worked for Reynolds, and occasionally for Zoffany. He was most fastidious in the arrangement of draperies but, once satisfied, painted them with amazing speed. No doubt Toms was obliged to use Sir Joshua's lay-figure when he worked at Leicester Fields; a property that after the President's death descended to his Italian assistant, Marchi. At Marchi's sale "The lay-figure used by Sir Joshua Reynolds" fetched only fifteen shillings.

Peter Toms enjoyed a lucrative practice as a painter of draperies, but his intemperance and total want of prudence brought him to poverty and it has been stated, erroneously, that he died by his own hand. It is, however, true that on one occasion, when half intoxicated, he attempted to commit suicide by cutting his throat. He wounded himself dangerously, but recovered and lived for several years, only to die in great distress on New Year's Day, 1777, at his lodgings in Rathbone Place. But poor as he was there is no record in the Academy minutes of any attempt on his part to obtain assistance from the funds of the Society of which he was a foundation member. Nor was any appeal made to the Royal Academy on behalf of his daughter, who was a girl of eighteen at the time of Toms' death.

Sandby says in his history of the Royal Academy that Toms painted draperies for Gainsborough, but evidence to support this statement is lacking. No artist has ever claimed to have

assisted Gainsborough in his work and it is unlikely that he was helped by anyone, except perhaps, in his later years, by his nephew and pupil Gainsborough Dupont. Philip Thicknesse who knew Gainsborough intimately when he was living at Bath, said of him in 1770, about the time the Academy was purchasing its lay-figure:—"He finishes with his own hands every part of the drapery; this, however trifling a matter it may be to some, is of great importance to the picture. The other eminent painters either cannot or will not be at that trouble." Sir Joshua Reynolds certainly did not paint all his own draperies, but he was not dependent upon Toms as Hudson and others were upon Van-aken, whose clients could not complete their pictures without his aid. Sir Joshua merely engaged assistants because of the overwhelming number of his commissions. A letter written by him to Daniel Daulby, a well-known collector of Rembrandt's etchings, shows how little he saw of his ordinary sitters. Daulby had asked for particulars of Sir Joshua's charges and arrangements for painting a portrait, and in his reply, written on September 9th, 1777, the artist says:—

"It requires in general three sittings, about an hour and a half each time, but if the sitter chooses it the face could be begun and finished in a day. It is divided into separate times for the convenience and ease of the person who sits. When the face is finished the rest is done without troubling the sitter."

From this it appears that at the time of writing this letter Reynolds usually devoted about four hours and a half to the face and that when this was finished pupils and drapery painters did most of the work that remained. It is not surprising that the draperies got mixed sometimes and that Toms on one occasion added an elaborate dress of state to Sir Joshua's head of a lady instead of the rural habit in which she wished to be depicted.

Sir Joshua, although himself a poor draughtsman, appreciated fully the value to students of drawing from the nude model, and the life classes at the Royal Academy were properly organized from the first. One of the earliest resolutions of the Council provided that four male models of different types should be permanently engaged, each of whom was to receive a weekly retaining fee of five shillings, with an additional shilling for every night that he was employed. Female models were better remunerated. They were paid half a guinea a night for sittings that lasted two or

three hours; and at the rival life school of the Incorporated Artists the female figure model was paid 7s. 6d. a night.

At the Academy schools for many years no unmarried student under twenty was permitted to draw from the female model, and when she was sitting no one but an Academician or a student was admitted to the life room—unless of the rank of Royalty. For, incredible as it seems, a resolution was passed by the Council in 1769, "That no person, the Royal Family excepted, be admitted to the Academy during the time the female model is sitting"; which interpreted literally would have excluded every one from the life room except the model and the Royalties. It is needless to say that this was not the intention of the resolution, but the reason of the exception from the rule of the King and his family is not clear, unless the Academicians anticipated that George the Third would follow the example of his grandfather, whose visit to the life school in St. Martin's Lane has already been described.

One of the first men engaged by the Royal Academy as a figure model, after the foundation of the schools, was James Dyer, a trooper in the Horse Guards. Subsequently he left the army to enter the service of Benjamin West in which he remained for fifty years. During most of that period he sat frequently for figures in West's large compositions; and sometimes, mounted on one of his master's two saddle horses, attended him on sketching excursions in Windsor Forest.

At the Exhibition of 1771 West increased his reputation by showing *The Death of General Wolfe*, his best picture and one in which the American artist broke through tradition by painting British soldiers in action accoutred as they were on the field of battle. Until this time it had been the custom to paint the soldier in classical costume, a custom that Reynolds supported until he saw *The Death of General Wolfe*. He stood silent before the picture for some time and then turned to its painter. "Mr. West," he said, "you have conquered." Contemporary notes show the interest that this picture excited and that West profited financially was proved by his painting five versions of it. The original picture shown at the Academy, was bought by Lord Grosvenor for £400, and remained in the possession of his heirs and successors until 1918 when the Duke of Westminster presented it to the Dominion of Canada. The others, in the order named, were for the King, the Prince of Waldeck, Lord Bristol and General Monckton. The General, it will be remembered, was Wolfe's

second in command. A sixth version of the picture, with variations, was painted by West for his private collection.

Among those who went to the Academy to see *The Death of General Wolfe* was Lord Chatham, the famous father of a famous son, William Pitt; and the Minister who had placed Wolfe in command of the army that captured Quebec. Lord Chatham's verdict was awaited with respectful attention by the visitors to the gallery. "His Lordship," we are told, "placed himself before the piece and examined it with great attention. Upon retiring he pronounced it well executed upon the whole, but thought there was too much dejection, not only in the dying hero's face, but in the faces of the surrounding officers, who, he said, as Englishmen, should forget all traces of private misfortunes when they had so grandly conquered for their country."

Garrick on one occasion visited the exhibition in the morning soon after the gallery was opened in order that he might have an opportunity of studying West's picture undisturbed. However, he found that the same idea had suggested itself to others, and although he arrived early a crowd had already gathered before *The Death of General Wolfe*. One of the most enthusiastic of the observers was a young woman of singular beauty whose comments on the picture, made to her friends, were so apt and well expressed that Garrick ventured to compliment her upon them. She admired West's picture extremely but objected to the expression of the dying commander. The actor agreed with her that it was wrong and declared that he could show her and the rest of the company what was wanting in the rendering of the face. Supported by two gentlemen he placed himself in the attitude of Wolfe and "displayed in his features the exact countenance depicted by the artist." He then assumed the expression of the transient rapture felt by the dying general when he heard the cry "They run, they run!" Garrick's feat was loudly applauded, but he said politely that the whole credit belonged to the lady who first pointed out the defect.

This singular demonstration may have been possible at the primitive exhibition of 1771, held in an auction room in Pall Mall, but it would not have been tolerated a few years afterwards when the Academy was permanently established at the new Somerset House. Breaches of the rules have never been permitted since the institution has had a house of its own, and at any of the later exhibitions Garrick's histrionic display would soon have been cut

THE ACADEMY'S FIRST GALLERY

short. He would have suffered the fate of Ruskin, who in 1843, when the Academy exhibition was held in Trafalgar Square, was caught in the act of making a pencil sketch of Turner's picture *The "Sun of Venice" going to Sea*, and was ejected by the police.

Of the appearance of the humble gallery in which Garrick personated Wolfe in 1771 some idea is given by the print after a drawing made in that year by Charles Brandion. The print shows the exhibition of the Royal Academy arranged in a top-lighted room divided in the middle by a screen as high as the walls. Both screen and walls are covered with pictures large and small, some of which can be identified in the print, and the simplicity of the accommodation for visitors is suggested by the seats, which are composed of planks with rough legs, such as those we see to-day outside the doors of country alehouses. The floor, ordinarily of plain boards, was covered with green baize on the days of the Royal and private views and the dinner. The accounts three or four years earlier of the Incorporated Society, from which the Royal Academy developed, include a bill for three hundred and thirty-eight yards of green baize, and the same material was used as a floor covering at the Academy on special occasions until comparatively modern times.

Desenfans gives an opinion of the work shown at this period which is as unflattering as that of Richard Wilson on the exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists, held a few years earlier. Writing in 1802 Desenfans says:—

"I perfectly remember the exhibitions made soon after the Academy was founded, and candour compels me to say that I never saw worse productions than those they were composed of, particularly in painting. Indeed it seemed as if the rules and principles had been totally unknown to most of the exhibitors, who had not the least notion of drawing, transparency, colouring or expression."

However, Desenfans is obliged to admit that at these exhibitions jewels were scattered among the rubbish, and in 1771 the jewels included Gainsborough's portrait group of Lady Sussex and her child; and his full length of Lady Ligonier, a woman whose charm and distinction of appearance contrast strangely with the unhappy story of her divorce and subsequent degradation. Reynolds, too, showed among other things his *Venus chiding Cupid for learning to cast accompts* and a portrait of Mrs. Abington; and there was a new attraction for the public in the work of

James Barry who had just returned from Italy and exhibited this year for the first time.

Barry's picture *Adam and Eve*, which figures prominently in Brandion's drawing, occupied one of the best places at the Academy, where it was well received although its frank nudity shocked some of the critics. One of them complained, quaintly:—"The only objection to this piece is an insufficiency of drapery; a fault common to most painters immediately after the tour of Italy, on account of the difference of climate." Barry became an Associate in the following year and his election was soon followed by the beginning of a long series of quarrels that disturbed the Academy until his ejection from its membership in 1799.



The Exhibition at the Royal Academy (Pall Mall), 1771

From a Drawing by Charles Brandion

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

James Barry; His "Venus rising from the Sea" laughed at by Walpole; A character of Barry; "Always unpleasing, harsh and repulsive"; Reynolds attacked in the "Morning Chronicle"; Barry his assailant?; "Fresnoy's" castigation of Barry; Hanging pictures at the Academy in 1773; The proposal to decorate St. Paul's Cathedral; Candid criticism of Barry in 1774; His portrait of Burke; He advertises for pupils; Zoffany in Florence; Painting "The Tribuna"; James Bruce and the excisemen; Zoffany writes on his behalf to Sir Joseph Banks; Lord Clive; Gainsborough and the Royal Academy Council; Sir Joshua's fading pictures; His sister Frances an exhibitor; Her house in Queen Square and collection of Old Masters; Sir Joshua and the fishmonger; The "execrable" dinners at Leicester Fields; Sir Joshua's vulgar appearance; Death of Goldsmith; His "Retaliation"; Lady Knight's account of it and of Goldsmith's improvidence; The Academicians celebrate the King's birthday in 1774; Dinner at Old Somerset House; The health of His Majesty; A salute of twenty-one guns from the river; Dominic Serres, R.A., directs the gunners; Giardini and the music after dinner; Gainsborough's aloofness; William Peters in Italy.

BARRY, encouraged by the favourable reception of his *Adam and Eve*, sent three paintings of classical subjects to the Academy of 1772 and in connection with one of them had the misfortune to be embroiled almost at once with Horace Walpole. The picture was *Venus rising from the Sea* and according to Walpole's story (and we have no other version) the friction was caused by the accidental overhearing by Barry of comments on it that were unflattering. Walpole, in another of those notes on his catalogues that tell us so much of the exhibitions of his time, writes against the title of *Venus rising from the Sea* that it is the work of a young Irishman who had been sent by Edmund Burke to study at Rome. Then he adds, in the third person:—

"Mr. H. W. supposed to laugh at the picture (*Venus rising from the Sea*) when Barry, whom he did not know, was present. B. resented this so much that in a treatise he wrote on painting he satirized Mr. W. as an admirer of the Flemish painters. Yet Mr. W. had been censured by others for undervaluing them too much in his preface to *Ædes Walpolianæ*."

Eleven years later, in his correspondence, Walpole refers again to this incident and admits that he laughed at the *Venus*. Writing in May, 1783, to his friend William Mason, he tells him that he is going to see Barry's pictures, then just completed in the great

room of the Society of Arts. He understands that the portraits of certain notable men and women of the period have been introduced into the compositions and placed in absurd positions by the painter. Before visiting the exhibition, says Walpole, "I must astringe my mouth with alum, lest I laugh and be put into purgatory again myself, as I was for the same crime when I first saw Barry's Homeric Venus standing stark naked in front and dragging herself up to Heaven by a pyramid of her own red hair. I had never heard of the man, and unfortunately he stood at my elbow." Another account of the affair, given by Walpole to Pinkerton, shows that Barry's vanity was in a measure responsible for his discomfiture. Walpole says that Barry knew he was in the room, and followed him, "eager, as I afterwards learned, to hear my expressions of admiration at his wonderful performance. Unluckily when I came up to this miracle of genius I cried out, 'Good God, what have we got here!' then burst into a loud laugh and passed on to the next." In this accidental collision with Walpole, Barry, for whatever reason, was placed in such an unfortunate position that it is impossible to help being sorry for him. But as a rule he deserves neither pity nor sympathy, for he seems to have been a man with whom it was almost impossible to remain on terms of amity; vain, insolent and quarrelsome to an extraordinary degree.

He appears in an unattractive light in the well-known story of his begging Nollekens to exchange hats one night when they were students together at Rome, and his subsequent admission of his reason for the change. The affair looks black enough as described, somewhat baldly, by Nollekens' biographer, J. T. Smith, but worse in a more detailed version for which Barry's contemporary and fellow-countryman, Henry Tresham, R.A., is the authority:—

"When Barry and Nollekens resided at Rome it was presumed that the former had (what was not very uncommon) made rather too free with the wife of his host. Barry was not singular in this instance; but the husband being less liberal in his ideas than many other Italian husbands, vowed vengeance against the violator of his honour. One night, as the artists sat late at a coffee house, Barry told the story, and vented his fears to Mr. Nollekens and begged the protection of his company home. This was agreed to. 'Now,' said Barry, 'I like you; you are a fine fellow, but d—n it you never look like a gentleman.

Why don't you dress better, here, take my hat.' At that time he wore one with gold lace. He placed it on Nollekens' head, and clapping that of the sculptor on his own, they sallied out. They had not proceeded far before they were assailed by ruffians, one of whom exclaimed: 'That's he!—the fellow with the gold-laced hat.' Nollekens, however, indebted to a swift pair of heels, escaped; and Barry arrived safe home."

An artist who knew Barry well and wrote a lengthy obituary of him, above the initials "B. L.," in *La Belle Assemblée*, speaks of the *Venus rising from the Sea* as his best work and places its author before any painter of his time with the single exception of Reynolds. On the other hand, he has nothing good to say of Barry as a man. "His temper," he says, "was uncertain and occasionally brutal; his oddities rendered it unsafe to mix with him, and they were so offensive that they could not be submitted to for the sake of his genius. In his person he was dirty and indifferent, in his deportment a savage, in his opinions fierce and obstinate; in his general conduct various, but always unpleasing, harsh and repulsive." This was written in 1806, immediately after Barry's death, and in some correspondence published in 1773, within three months of his election as an Academician, he is described in terms that suggest in his early manhood, a character as unamiable and arrogant as that given to him late in life by "A Professional Friend."

In May, 1773, Barry had reason to congratulate himself upon his rapid progress. Little more than two years had elapsed since he arrived in London from Italy, an artist almost unknown who had not exhibited a single picture, and in that brief period he had made a reputation, and had been elected an Associate one year and an Academician the next. This was to his credit, but he had also managed to arouse against himself an incredible bitterness of opposition from men who regarded him as a braggart and a bully and accused him of covert attacks upon Sir Joshua at a time when he was accepting the President's hospitality.

The correspondence in which these charges were made has not, I think, been quoted before by any writer on eighteenth-century art. It was commenced by a letter published in the *Morning Chronicle*, and addressed to "Sir Joshua Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy." In this communication, signed "Fabius Pictor," Sir Joshua is reproved in contemptuously patronizing terms for venturing beyond the range of portrait painting and for

showing at the Academy such works as the *Venus chiding Cupid for learning to cast Accompts*, in 1771; and the *Count Ugolino and his Children in the Dungeon*, in which White the paviour figures as the Count. This picture was being exhibited when the following letter appeared on May 1st, 1773:—

“SIR

“If you are as wise in some parts of conduct as you are in others let me advise you to keep to your portrait painting; you have often succeeded in it very happily and although (as the arts are rising fast) ’tis not over likely that you will always be able to preserve the first name, yet you will ever be deemed a man of considerable excellence in that way.

“It were indeed a pity that any falling off in your business as a portrait painter should oblige you at so late a time of life to begin wrestling with the difficulties of a new profession; the painting of history is new and strange to you, as appears but too evidently from your unfledged picture last year of *Venus and Cupid casting up accounts* and the *Ugolino and his Family* now in the present exhibition. Why Sir, if those pictures were shown even in France or Italy where you may be ever so little known, everybody would at the first glance judge them to be the rude, disorderly abortions of an unstudied man; of a portrait painter who, quitting the confined track where he was calculated to move in safety, had ridiculously bewildered himself in unknown regions, unfurnished with either chart or compass. Be advised, Sir Joshua, keep to your portraits which will do your self and your country credit, and leave history painting (as you do watchmaking and navigation) for those who have studied it.

“If you suspect the sincerity of my advice ask some history painter (we have three or four of them) or even some travelled man who has knowledge of these matters, and depend upon it that if he does not flatter you, his opinion and mine will be very little different; he will inform you that your figures are *shockingly out of drawing* and finished in a slobbering, herum-skerum, unartist-like way; that from the first conception of them they smell rankly of the portrait, and are totally wide of all true historical character.

“This will mortify you, no doubt, but as you are *a very cool man* with your passions always in a proper subordination to

A CRITIC OF SIR JOSHUA

your *interests* I have great hopes that you will make a prudent use of the hints (they are but hints) that I have given you, and although there are many men to whom what I have said would rather become poison than medicine, yet Sir Joshua is not, I hope, of that number; it will have the most salutary effects upon him, will purge off those gross humours, deliriums and eccentricity that would other wise contaminate his character.

I am, and shall be

as occasion offers, always

Your Humble Servant

FABIUS PICTOR."

This brought forth among other letters one signed "An Artist," in which the writer, addressing Sir Joshua, with whom he says he is unacquainted, controverts "Fabius Pictor"; and after declaring that the *Count Ugolino and his Children in the Dungeon* is easily the best historical picture England has yet produced, speculates upon the identity of the writer of the attack and hints, as it seems to me, that he is none other than Barry. And Barry it may be remarked was charged in later years with publishing notes in newspapers anonymously praising his own work. "An Artist" says in his letter to Reynolds in the *Morning Chronicle*:—

"The person who addresses you under the signature of *Fabius Pictor*, from the additional title he gives you of President of the Royal Academy—though it must properly belong to you—I conclude to be some perturbed spirit amongst the very body over which you preside; some invidious person who finds his own imbecility with respect to those faithful imitations of nature called portraits, concerning which everybody can pronounce a judgment; and the eligibility of his pursuing some track that would be removed from the exacter scrutinies of criticism. This track he calls that of history, in which he may spread into broad inaccuracy and extend his faculties out to monstrous productions without the risk of immediate detection by the *vox populi*."

A trenchant critic of Barry then appears in the controversy in the person of the writer signing himself "Fresnoy," whose open letter to Reynolds in 1769 is quoted in Chapter Fifteen. He now champions Reynolds, and without actually charging Barry with the authorship of the letter of May 1st, attacks him mercilessly for his alleged slander of the great painter and for his own conceit

and incompetence. "Fresnoy," whoever he may have been, was well acquainted with the art politics of the period and with the private affairs of Barry, whose violence, he declares, has frightened the critics, himself included. However, there are no signs of fear in his letter, which is a most spirited piece of invective. He says, on May 3rd, addressing himself "To James B——y":—

"That you have had every advantage an artist can possibly have is not to be denied; you have studied in all the repositories abroad, you were there supported by your friends and in such a manner that you were never under the necessity of drudging for interest. No Sir, they meant that you should, and you did, study for instruction only, and lastly you were master of your time. No artist ever left this or any other kingdom upon a more liberal plan. But if, instead of seeing the canvas animate at your touch, we are to be stunned with a sesquipedality of words, if our ears are to be made the judges of what you *can* do and not our eyes of what you *have* done, why then I will tell you, Mr. Barry, that you do most abominably deceive yourself. If you exhibit a picture of an Adam and Eve that throws us into an epileptic, a Venus that gives us an ague, a Chiron and Achilles that shuts up our senses and leaves us in a state of torpor, surely Sir you cannot suppose but that we will remember these violent operations. You cannot imagine, however apt your mind at improbabilities, that we shall again listen and again give credit to your drunken fustian.

"It is true, Mr. Barry, that you have had impudence and lung enough to keep our attention from your work for some time, by rolling over our heads your mustard bowl eloquence, which indeed so terrified us that we did not dare to make public what we so severely felt from your performances. It is time now to inform you that you are now the *ludibrium* of every company where you have ever appeared, and the sale of your works has convinced you that the effect of them is considered as baneful as nightshade, under whose influence none can exist but yourself.

"When I hear you maligning the greatest characters among the ancients to exalt your own, and the imperious solemnity of your contempt for the moderns, I own I lose my patience. For instance, and in your own words, 'Raphael was a very ingenious young man.' This, Mr. Barry, is in the true spirit of damning with faint praise. Again, 'Sir Joshua Reynolds! Why he

knows no more of art than my shoe.' Now you know, Mr. Barry, that to save your soul from perdition you could not paint a picture in which so much *simple* knowledge of the art is shown as in that of the Strawberry Girl by your *friend* Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose ignorance is your constant theme in every place but at his own table, where you are his constant guest. I am amazed he will suffer you to enter his doors for he must have heard of your notorious calumnies—but perhaps you have frightened him too? Sir Joshua Reynolds has long been the quarry on which at some convenient time you have determined to throw yourself, but take care Sir, there are some quarries on which you will split as on a rock. Sir Joshua is not the only man you have treated with perfidy, a perfidy that deserves I know not what punishment."

Barry made no reply to these charges and this curious correspondence was brought to a close with a letter from a fourth writer "P.P.," who gives us a glimpse, true or false, of the operations of the Hanging Committee of the Academy in 1773. The initials suggest Peter Pindar, but it is unlikely that Wolcot, who used that pseudonym, was writing on art at this date. "P.P." detested Barry, but he was equally out of sympathy with Reynolds, and described the pair as "two serpents."

"This being premised," he says, "I will furnish you with a few particulars that must set Mr. Barry's vanity in a strong light. A few days ago, at the hanging up of the pictures in the Exhibition Room, the Committee (appointed for that purpose) had placed his picture of *Jupiter and Juno* next to Sir Joshua's picture of *Ugolino*, where No. 86 now stands. Sir Joshua coming there next day—full of a tender concern for Mr. Barry's fate—insisted upon the *Jupiter and Juno* being removed and placed in some less dangerous neighbourhood, which was done accordingly. Mr. Barry's vanity took the alarm when this was told him, and he so misconceived everything as to insinuate to his friends that Sir Joshua's only concern was for the effect of his own picture, which, as it was painted more in the portrait way than the historical, he was conscious would be seen to more advantage placed near dogs and game than near a *Jupiter and Juno* executed (as Mr. Barry would perhaps insinuate) upon the large, elevated plan of the Greek statuaries and poets."

The picture No. 86, which Sir Joshua is said to have placed

next to his *Ugolino* instead of Barry's *Jupiter and Juno*, was Stephen Elmer's *Sportsmen with Dead Game*. "P.P." concludes his letter with some extremely unflattering comments upon Barry's pictures in general and his work then at the Academy in particular. His hints as to forthcoming pictures show that he has some acquaintance with the subjects upon which Barry was then engaged. Apparently "P.P." was a newspaper critic as he says to "Fresnoy," to whom his letter was addressed:—

"As to the picture of *Jupiter and Juno*, you and I, it is to be hoped, will do its business with the public. What hinders our calling Juno a clumsy, drunken streetwalker just broke out of bridewell and embracing her bedlamite Patagonian paramour upon a dunghill. The works that he is engaged upon are just as foolish and loathsome as what he has hitherto exhibited, so they will be a feast to you. A Stratonice, death of Adonis, the birth of Pandora, the spirit of Hercules rising like a phoenix out of its ashes (indicating the triumph of virtue over mortality) and many other such absurd and ridiculous things."

What must Sir Joshua have thought of this correspondence, published in a journal that in 1773 had the standing of *The Times* to-day? It is unmentioned, I think, in any of his letters, but we may be sure that he saw it, and probably awaited with curiosity the publication of one important item; for "Fresnoy" in the *Morning Chronicle* of April 19th had promised Barry the trouncing he gave him on May 3rd. Some one, apparently, called Sir Joshua's attention to the announcement, as in his pocket-book for 1773, among some miscellaneous notes written at the end of April, there appears the following, "The Morning Chronicle of 19th."

"Fresnoy's" promise of the 19th of April was included in a letter addressed to the Royal Academicians at large, in which he contradicted a rumour of his death. He was, he declared, "as festive as ever," and intended to give some opinions on their pictures "that shall not be wanting in sal volatile."

"I mean to show your works in other glasses than you yourselves have seen them; and I shall first kneel down (I would I had a Milesian bog for a cushion) at the feet of Mr. Barry, for he is the most luxuriant of all. But if I do not prune his scyons close to the trunk, and that too most carefully, I am no gardener of the arts."

Northcote tells us that he heard Reynolds say on one occasion

THE DECORATION OF ST. PAUL'S

that it was a bad thing to hate any man but that he feared he did hate Barry; and if so he had much excuse—if excuse were possible? Reynolds, however, probably made this remark at some later period than 1773, for in the autumn of that year, a few months after the correspondence in the *Morning Chronicle*, he and Barry were collaborating in the scheme for the decoration of St. Paul's, which failed owing to the opposition of Dr. Terrick, Bishop of London, whose action fortunately preserved Wren's cathedral from disfigurement by bad pictures. Some idea of the low standard of the decorative painting of that day is given by the petition of the Royal Academy to the King, in which he is begged to support the St. Paul's scheme. The Academicians in this appeal remind His Majesty that, "By your individual encouragement of the arts of design, you have given an example to the world equally wise and princely in the magnificent Biblical paintings with which you have decorated St. George's Hall and the Royal Chapel of Windsor." The "magnificent Biblical paintings" were by Benjamin West, not one of whose many subject pictures is to-day considered worthy to figure in the National Gallery. West was the first to offer a picture for St. Paul's, to which, had it not been for the opposition of the Bishop, he would have given a representation of *Moses with the Laws*.

Reynolds, it is true, was a great artist, but his work is not of the kind best fitted for the decoration of a cathedral, and few would care to see St. Paul's adorned with the efforts of any of his proposed coadjutors who were—with West—Barry, Cipriani, Nathaniel Dance and Angelica Kauffman. According to Barry, the Royal Academy, if it had then been possible, would have added to these artists "that ingenious Proteus Gainsborough, who is so becoming and excellent in every shape he assumes." Gainsborough presumably was not invited because he was on bad terms with the Academy in 1773 and contributed nothing to its exhibition of that year.

Some of the timid or merely descriptive comments on Barry's pictures shown at the Academy of 1774, seem to support the assertion of "Fresnoy," that the caustic tongue and pen of the Irish artist were feared by the critics. One of them, however, who had the courage of his convictions, asserted with well-assumed seriousness that Barry intended his *King Lear* (7) to be regarded as a burlesque. "Cordelia," says this genial critic, in conclusion, "is represented by a fat Billingsgate fishwoman overpowered with

gin, and Lear, personated by an old clothesman, is picking her pocket. Even this can convey no idea of the extravagance of the production." Of another picture shown this year by Barry, *Mercury inventing the Lyre* (9), Allan Cunningham says, without giving his authority, that it was "much admired by the imaginative." It may have been, but the only contemporary criticism that I have found on *Mercury inventing the Lyre* is that of Walpole, who passes it by briefly as "quite mad."

Barry exhibited a portrait this year (No. 10) which is described as that of Edmund Burke by Mr. Graves in his *Dictionary of Contributors to the Royal Academy*. I venture to think that this attribution is erroneous, as the well-known correspondence between Barry and Burke about the sittings for the portrait took place in July, 1774, some weeks after the close of the exhibition. In nothing does Barry show to less advantage than in this correspondence with the man who, though far from rich himself, had provided the means for him to visit Italy and to support him while there. A friend of Burke's, Dr. Brocklesby, was desirous of possessing a portrait of the statesman and induced him to promise to sit to Barry. Any other painter of the time would have been proud of the commission and would have made arrangements to suit the convenience of a distinguished sitter, whose time was so occupied with public affairs that he never knew beforehand when he might be free. But Barry insisted that etiquette demanded that he should have notice of the visits, and Burke, calling frequently at his house, was always told that the painter was engaged. Sir Joshua, to whom Burke was also sitting at the time, did everything he could to oblige him, but Barry chose to stand upon his dignity, and if it had not been for the extraordinary courtesy and humility of Burke, would have lost the chance of painting his great fellow-countryman.

Yet Barry at this time was desperately in need of commissions for, as "Fresnoy" hints in his letter, collectors fought shy of his subject pictures, and in the same year that he treated Burke with so much discourtesy he was compelled to advertise for pupils. It must have been a bitter humiliation to the vain painter to be obliged to publish such an appeal as the following advertisement:—

"James Barry, Painter, Member of the Royal Academy, and the Clementini Academy of Bologna, informs such of the young Nobility and Gentry as may be desirous of forming a

taste for the Arts and a Knowledge and Practice of Drawing that he will wait upon such as honour him with their commands, and give lessons twice a week at three guineas a month. He continues his business as usual at Suffolk Street, No. 29, Haymarket, where he is to be met with, Mondays and Tuesdays excepted."

Gainsborough, who sent nothing to the Academy this year, was not the only distinguished absentee, for Zoffany who had left England in 1772 was unable to return as he had intended in the spring of 1774. He was still in Italy painting for the King the well-known picture now in the Royal collection *A Room in the Gallery of Florence called the Tribuna*, for which if a contemporary writer can be trusted he was well paid by His Majesty.

"It is an actual fact that this Royal and munificent Mæcenas allowed Mr. Zoffany during his residence in Italy while he was posing the Tribuna from the paintings in the Florentine Gallery, no less a sum than fifteen hundred pounds. Besides this he gave him eight hundred for the painting itself, and defrays the other incidental expenses entirely from his own private purse."

Among the portraits introduced by Zoffany into his picture of the Tribuna is that of James Bruce, who had recently returned from those travels in Abyssinia which had brought him world-wide reputation, although Dr. Johnson and others were sceptical about some of his stories. Bruce, a giant in strength and stature, whom Fanny Burney describes as "the tallest man you ever saw gratis," was himself a draughtsman and interested in art and archæology. He had brought from the East to Florence many drawings, which, to protect them, were mounted and bound in leather covers. This made them liable to duty and the traveller, aware that they would be stopped at Dover, dreaded their possible rough usage by excisemen. At the request of Lord Cowper he was also conveying from Italy a present for the King in the shape of a case containing "the miniature pictures of painters in the Grand Duke's Gallery." Bruce wished to obtain a protection that would pass all his artistic luggage through the custom house without examination, and at Zoffany's suggestion wrote to Sir Joseph Banks begging him to apply for one on his behalf, to Lord North.

Zoffany, who during his stay in Italy had maintained a friendly correspondence with Sir Joseph, sent him Bruce's appeal with an

amusing letter of introduction. He says, writing on the 15th of January, 1774:—

“You will wonder much perhaps at the trouble I give you in sending so great a packet, but by opening it you will find that it comes from a same-sized great man; the wonder of his age, the terror of married men, and a constant lover. Mr. Bruce, who having great numbers of drawings of architecture and natural history, and divers others of his works, should be glad if you could find ways to get an order to prevent an inspection at the Custom House, as by the enclosed you will be better informed of.

“My works, I hope, will be finished by the latter end of March when I shall immediately set out on my return to Old England. We had the other day, passing here, Lord Clive, who was much entertained here and is now set off for Rome and Naples. He should have liked a picture similar to what I am now painting of the Tribuna, but poor man, he could not go to the expense! I saw a print of the Academy which very little pleased me, as there is no likeness in the heads, and I very much wonder at the success of it. Your book of the last voyage goes off here amazingly and I hear it is to be translated. How does Mr. Hunter, I don't hear anything of him? I beg my respects to Dr. Solander and all the gentlemen of the Club.”

Clive, when Zoffany met him at Florence, was a broken man travelling in search of that health and happiness he was never to recover. The remark about his poverty is, of course, sarcastic, as Clive at this time was credited with the possession of fabulous wealth, which he did not enjoy long, for he committed suicide in the autumn of the same year. The print of which Zoffany disapproved was the engraving of his picture, already mentioned, of the Academy Life School at Old Somerset House. The Club was a society of literary and scientific men that held its meetings at Young Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's Lane. John Hunter was the chairman, and the members included Sir Joseph Banks and Dr. Solander.

The Royal Academy though not yet self-supporting in 1774 had made its position secure and could afford to ignore the rivalry of the Incorporated Society, which by this time was practically insolvent. In spite of the abstention of Gainsborough and the absence of Zoffany abroad, the exhibitions at the Academy grew each year more popular and the guests at its banquets in-

cluded an ever-increasing number of men of rank and distinction. The steady improvement in the position of the Academy seems to have been due chiefly to the influence and achievements of its President. His pictures were the principal attractions at the exhibitions and on the surface he appeared to be all powerful in the institution, but the steady support of Gainsborough by a number of the Academicians suggests that Reynolds had to face a strong undercurrent of opposition. Gainsborough, who had disagreed with him, probably about the hanging of the pictures in 1772, was placed on the Council in 1774, and by election, for the Academicians did not then succeed in rotation as they do to-day. But he attended none of the meetings and in the following year the other members of the Council decided that his name should be struck off the list. The members of the Council present when this order was made were Reynolds, Newton, Barry, Burch, Nollekens, Moser and Meyer. Their action, however, was not supported by the General Assembly of the Academicians who, overriding the vote of the Council, restored Gainsborough to his place.

In the absence of Gainsborough Reynolds was supreme at the exhibition of 1774, where his group of thirteen canvases included *Three Ladies adorning a Term of Hymen*, painted from the beautiful daughters of Sir William Montgomery; subjects, the painter declared, "such as I am never likely to meet with again as long as I live." This picture as we see it now in the National Gallery is no doubt far less brilliant than it was in 1774, for in that year the complaints were frequent of the evanescent nature of Sir Joshua's colouring. One critic says of the whole length of the Duchess of Gloucester (214) that although "uncommonly elegant when first executed it has lost nearly the whole of its force with the beauties of its colouring." Another famous whole length by Reynolds (218) is thus described. "Mrs. Pelham in a flowered muslin Brunswick dress, feeding her poultry. The colours having been laid on some time are exceedingly gone off." Bishop Newton's portrait, the title of which does not appear in the first edition of the catalogue, is mentioned by the *Public Advertiser* as "a fine picture but the colours fled."

It is well known that Sir Joshua's sister, Frances, was also a painter, one whose work, as her brother declared, made him cry and other people laugh. Frances Reynolds painted Dr. Johnson, by whom she was greatly esteemed. He addresses her in some of his letters as "Dearest Dear." To please her he sat once for three

hours at a stretch; a great sacrifice of time for the Doctor, and of principle too, for in a general way he disapproved of feminine portrait painters. "Staring in men's faces," he said, "is very indelicate in a female." No one, I think, has suspected hitherto that Frances Reynolds exhibited at the Royal Academy, a fact that is revealed by reviewers of 1774 and 1775. She was the painter of two pictures exhibited in 1774 by "A Lady"; No. 354 *Children going to Bed*, and No. 355 "*The Garland*," from Prior. I have been unable to find any criticism of *The Garland*, but the writer of *Strictures on the Pictures, Busts, etc. at the Royal Academy*, says of *Children going to Bed*:—

"We do not remember ever to have seen a prettier subject for the exercise of a lady's pencil than No. 354, nor could it perhaps be better made use of in the hands of the most experienced artist. It represents a maid servant putting three beautiful children to bed. The first, about two years old, she is undressing on her lap. The second, about four, is kneeling by her side, saying its prayers, whilst the third, somewhat older, is jumping into bed with all that wild flow of spirits which usually belongs to such a time of life. The public are indebted for this picture to Miss Reynolds, sister to the President of the Royal Academy." In 1775 Miss Reynolds was represented at the Academy by *Lace Makers*, miniature, (382), which one of the critics described as "a pretty, elegant, feeling picture."

A glimpse of Sir Joshua's sister as a painter is given in a note by Joseph Moser, who lived for many years in Queen Square, Westminster, where, he says, Frances Reynolds tenanted two or three houses in succession:—

"This lady, whom we well remember, resided with Sir Joshua at his house in Leicester Fields. She was with respect to the graphic art more attached to its principles than successful in its practice. Yet we have seen sketches from her pencil (and all her work had a sketchy appearance) that in their composition exhibited strong traits of originality. After the death of her brother she took a large house in Queen Square, Westminster; indeed her own works were so numerous that a *large* house was absolutely necessary. She afterwards moved to a *larger* house, and we think to a third in the same square. She was a lady of genius and learning, though with respect to painting, Goldsmith (it is said by Meyer) offended her because he, who was eccentricity personified in his scrambling way,

observed that she loved pictures better than she understood them. She continued to paint, we believe, as long as she could hold the pencil, and her easel used frequently to be set up near her parlour window in order advantageously to display some favourite performance to the admiring passengers."

Moser is right in stating that Frances Reynolds owned a great number of pictures but wrong in supposing that they were all the work of her own hands. She shared her brother's passion for collecting Old Masters, and most of the pictures in the Queen Square houses were by foreign artists. These were sold four years before her death in 1807, by Phillips the auctioneer of New Bond Street, who described them as "a genuine collection of ancient pictures by the most approved Masters of the Italian, French, Flemish and Dutch schools, the property of Mrs. Reynolds, of Queen Square, Westminster." The collection must have been large, as the sale covered two days.

Frances Reynolds has been represented by some who knew her as odd, vague, and forgetful, but during the time that she was acting as housekeeper to her brother in Leicester Fields she enjoyed a reputation as a good woman of business that survived long after her death. Until the middle of the nineteenth century there stood in Coventry Street, within two or three hundred yards of Sir Joshua's house, a fish shop that in his time was kept by a man named Robertson; and from this shop came the fish for those famous dinners at which the company was beyond reproach although the service and supplies were not always adequate. Sir Joshua, who according to the fishmonger was not too liberal to his tradesmen, used to walk through Coventry Street nearly every morning and frequently stopped at Robertson's to select provisions for the day. He chose his fish, reversed their positions on the leaden slope to show that they were sold, and then sent Miss Reynolds to arrange about the price. "Miss Reynolds," said the fishmonger, "never chose. Sir Joshua never paid. But both were good at bargains."

The dinners at Leicester Fields, though perhaps tolerable while Miss Reynolds remained her brother's housekeeper, fell to a very low gastronomical level after the management passed into the hands of her niece. This we know through the Rev. John Mitford, who, born a generation too late to have been acquainted with Reynolds, loved to collect information about him and his contemporaries. Mitford numbered among his friends two or

three men who in their younger days had often dined at Leicester Fields, and they, he declares:—"excellent judges of what a dinner should be, agree in saying that Sir Joshua's were *execrable*."

Of Sir Joshua and his sister Frances brief sketches are given in the *Autobiography* of Cornelia Knight, whose mother Lady Knight was a friend of Frances Reynolds. Miss Knight in her girlhood often spent a day at the President's house. On these occasions she received instruction in drawing from Miss Reynolds, who in her opinion was possessed of much information and talent. Miss Knight's picture of Sir Joshua is more defined, but in some respects unpleasing.

"His pronunciation," she says, "was tinctured with the accent of Devonshire, his features coarse, his outward appearance slovenly." This is qualified by an admission that his mind was "certainly not inelegant," and that the graces he did not himself possess he could confer in his pictures. Evidently she thought Sir Joshua common looking, and on this point was in agreement with the art critic of the *St. James's Chronicle*, who knew him, and in noticing Rigaud's group of Reynolds, Sir William Chambers, and Wilton the sculptor at the Academy of 1782, said:—"They are strong and expressive resemblances, but the integrity which led the artist to copy so exactly the vulgarity of the President's countenance will not recommend him to favour, and he will probably remain some time longer among the Associates." The group in which the features of Sir Joshua are depicted with such unflattering fidelity is in the National Portrait Gallery.

Frances Reynolds lived with her brother for many years, but the two were never entirely in agreement, and Sir Joshua's practice of painting on Sundays was the cause of much trouble to his sister. It was a grave matter to her, a deeply religious woman brought up to observe the Sabbath strictly. The most sarcastic of all the known letters written by Sir Joshua is addressed to his sister, in reply to her request that he should make over to her the Richmond villa in which on summer Sundays he was accustomed to entertain his friends. This letter which Mr. Rupert Colomb kindly allows me to publish is addressed to "Mrs. Reynolds, Richmond." It is endorsed 1781, but otherwise undated.

"DEAR SISTER,

I am very much obliged to you for your kind and generous offer in regard to the house at Richmond, not only in giving me

Dear Sister

I am very much obliged to you
for your kind and generous offer in regard
to the house at Richmond not only in giving
me leave to use it occasionally but even as
long as I live, provided I will give it
to you, but as I have no such thought
at present I can only thank you for
your kindness — No, I am much
older than you I hope I am not yet
arriving to dotage as you seem to think

By permission of Mr. Rupert Colamb

I am, voluntarily to put myself in the
situation of receiving the favour of living
in my own house instead of conferring
the favour of letting you live in it

I am your most affectionate

Mother

J. Reynolds

I have enclosed
of Mr. Paine

Thank you

Letter from Sir Joshua Reynolds to his Sister Frances

DEATH OF GOLDSMITH

leave to use it occasionally but even as long as I live, provided I will give it to you, but as I have no such thoughts at present I can only thank you for your kindness—tho' I am much older than you I hope I am not yet arrived to dotage as you seem to think. I am voluntarily to put myself in the situation of receiving the favour of living in my own house, instead of conferring the favour of letting you live in it.

I am your most affectionate

Brother

J. REYNOLDS.

I have enclosed a Bank Bill of ten Pounds."

Early in April, 1774, Sir Joshua suffered a great loss by the death of Oliver Goldsmith, to whom of all his numerous friends he was the most sincerely attached. Goldsmith's death, which affected the painter so much that he could not touch a brush on the day it occurred, is the subject of some interesting comments by Lady Knight in a letter written to a friend in Devonshire on the 18th of April. The last employment of the poet to which she refers was the writing of *Retaliation*, a poem produced in reply to the epitaphs on him composed not long before by Garrick and others. Lady Knight says:—

"The death of Dr. Goldsmith was sudden and much lamented by his companions, his last employment before his illness was making comic epitaphs upon his particular friends, and his own was not completely finished when he was taken away. Miss Reynolds gave them to us to read and I requested a copy for you but it was declined as Sir Joshua did not think they had been seen or that the persons named should think they should. However, they have been seen in fifty different companies, there's not much wit in them, when I can I will get them for you.

"You know how inconsiderate he always was in money matters. He had fortunately been advanced a hundred pounds by the managers of one of the playhouses a fortnight before his death, or else I fear his illness would have taken him penniless. When the first gust of affectionate concern for his loss is over I fancy his friends will think it better that he did not live till age had weakened his mental powers, for provident, I fear he never would have been. I have not seen Johnson since his death."

Sir Joshua was not the only person who thought that Goldsmith's *Retaliation* was meant to be read by none but those within a particular circle, and its publication after the poet's death was deplored by a well-informed correspondent of the *Public Advertiser*. This correspondent, anonymous, but apparently of Irish birth, states in a long letter that the verses were hastily composed by Goldsmith a few days before his last illness for the private amusement of a company of gentlemen whom friendship had brought together three or four times in the course of as many weeks, and were read by him at one of their meetings:—

“As the poem turns wholly upon personality there must have been found someone not very tenacious of his own character before those of other people could be handed to the press, and as it displays the levities of a company of friends who trusted their thoughts to each other there was wanting someone without much sense of friendship and no great respect for society to perform the office of a publisher. This would probably never have been performed during the life of Doctor Goldsmith, but at his decease the fragment fell into the hands of a public spirited gentleman with whom punctilios of this sort weighed little. . . . As it is clear by all the rules of honour and good fellowship that this poem ought never to have seen the light there could not be a better reason in his mind for bringing it out of obscurity.”

The writer of the letter seems to connect the “public spirited gentleman” with the author of the *Explanatory Notes and Observations* published with the poem, and after quoting him as declaring that at some of the meetings of friends referred to “wit sparkled sometimes at the expense of good nature,” adds:—

“He proceeds to say *it was proposed to write epitaphs upon the Doctor*, and that his country, dialect and person, furnished subjects for witticisms. This charge would be serious if it were true, but as to the Doctor's *country*, by the Notes it appears that many if not most of those gentlemen shared the honour or disgrace (it is indifferent to them which the Editor may think it) of being born in Ireland as well as Dr. Goldsmith. As to his dialect, the matter of his discourse being generally so agreeable they little regarded the manner of it; and for his person they would wish the world to know that there were few men to be selected who held it in equal esteem. It was at one of these meetings that the proposal was first

started, and as soon adopted, of paying the last honour to his memory by the erection of a monument in Poets' Corner, and it is one of those *ill-natured* gentlemen who is now writing his epitaph. In one word the reader may be assured that neither in the sweet nor the bitter of this poem, neither in the characters displayed as principals or foisted in as accessories was meant to be conveyed any serious matter or opinion; everything was written in the spirit of pleasantry and caricature."

Forster, when in his life of Goldsmith he tells the story of the yellow peas and "Turn'em Green," says that it was at Burke's house that the poet made his unfortunate attempt to pass off another man's humour as his own. But in a much better account than Forster's, published in the *St. James's Chronicle* in 1783, it is stated that everything connected with the incident took place at the table of Sir Joshua, who, to gratify the vanity of Goldsmith, arranged the second dinner in order that he might show off the joke in the presence of Burke, a rival punster. The following is the story of 1783 published, it should be remembered, while Sir Joshua and Burke were alive and flourishing:—

"ANECDOTE OF THE LATE DOCTOR GOLDSMITH.

"The Doctor—to the credit of puns—was passionately fond of that retail wit. Dining one day with Sir Joshua Reynolds he had his eye upon some early peas, which had, however, a very yellow hue. A gentleman who sat near the Doctor desired the servant to take them from the table and send them to Kensington. This alarmed the Doctor, who asked why they were to be sent there? 'Why?' said the gentleman, 'because that is the way to Turn'em Green.' This pun so tickled the Doctor's fancy that Sir Joshua invited him to dine the next day, and promised to give him the credit of being the parent of it to a friend of theirs, Mr. Burke, who would be there, and who envied those who were quicker than himself in hitting off a good pun. Yellow-green peas were accordingly provided, and the Doctor, full of glee, had the plate put between him and his brother punster. 'Here,' said he to the servant, 'take these peas away to Kensington.' 'Why would you send them there?' said Mr. Burke, 'peas are a great rarity at this time of the year.' 'Why?' said the Doctor, 'because that is the way to make'em Green.' But, perceiving his mistake. 'I mean,' he said, 'that is the road to Turnham Green.' But finding the bull grow bigger and

bigger he threw his wig into the fire and went home bare-headed."

Goldsmith died only a few weeks before a banquet to which he would have been invited as an honorary member of the Royal Academy. Given by that Society in 1774, on the 4th of June, the birthday of the King, it was more brilliant than any of the Academy's earlier festivities of the kind. Goldsmith in particular would have been amused at some of the surprises prepared for the distinguished company assembled in one of the stately apartments of the old Palace of Somerset House. Of the surprises the most startling was a salute from the river of twenty-one guns when Sir Joshua proposed the first toast—the health of His Majesty. The salute was from the guns of a small armed ship which had been brought up the Thames for the purpose and moored off Somerset House. This part of the entertainment was directed by one of the Academicians, the Gascon, Dominic Serres, who is described by a contemporary artist as "a fine boisterous fellow," well versed in Latin, Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese, and speaking fluent English. Serres, as he had been a sailor in his youth and now painted pictures of naval battles for the King, was supposed to be an authority on the subject of salutes.

The twenty-one guns for the King were fired with satisfactory order and at proper intervals, but the salutes that followed the other toasts were disappointing, partly it was said, owing to the nervousness of the Academician-Admiral who signalled from a window at Somerset House to the "gentlemen artillery" on board the ship. One of the guests at the dinner says:—

"Notwithstanding the great care and anxiety with which Mr. Serres had arranged the saluting ordnance they did not perform with that regularity and exactness which he too fondly expected from inexperienced gunners. Every bounce out of time was observed to give him much uneasiness, greater indeed than such a cause seemed to deserve; but he comforted himself with the impossibility of perfection and assured the company that 'it was just the same at Portsmouth.' The dinner over the guests expected a song from some of the choice spirits assembled, but again they were agreeably surprised by the appearance of an excellent band of music with Giardini at its head; several fine pieces of music by Abel and others were played admirably well, and Signor Savoi sang a very fine air.

'The evening was closed with the greatest mirth and cheerfulness imaginable.'

Gainsborough was not present at this gathering although he was passionately fond of music, and Giardini, Abel and Savoi—the last a singer with a voice of peculiar, and singularly beautiful tone—were all numbered among his personal friends and sitters. Giardini, who played several violin solos after the dinner, and was at that time the most distinguished musician in England, had been known to Gainsborough since that painter's early days at Ipswich. Almost as long but incomparably more intimate had been his acquaintance with Abel whose music moved him in an extraordinary and sometimes absurd fashion, and who was perhaps nearer and dearer to him than any other of his friends.

Writing on the day of Abel's death Gainsborough declared in one of the most touching of his letters that henceforth he should never cease to look up to heaven, "the little while I have to stay behind, in the hopes of getting one more glance of the man I loved from the moment I heard him touch the string." Yet not even the society of Abel could attract Gainsborough to the festivities of the Royal Academy.

It is believed that he never attended any dinner given by that institution, and he was so rarely present at its meetings that he was unknown by sight to William Peters, although they were fellow-Academicians for eleven years.

Peters too was absent from the Academy dinner of 1774, for he had returned to Italy, the country to which he paid his first visit in 1762, when he went there as a youth to study art, and spent eight or nine months on the journey from Dublin to Rome. His troubles in travelling were even worse than those endured by Major the engraver whose journey to Paris when a student I have described in Chapter Six. Writing to an artist in London on May 6th, 1762, Peters says:—

"I am but a week in Rome though I left Dublin last August, having been two months at sea between that place and Cadiz, beating about in the midst of the equinoctial storms on board a little one-masted Dutch dogger; and was afterwards obliged to remain three months at Gibraltar before I had the opportunity of a man-of-war for Leghorn, but I hope now for some improving studies in this much-talked-of City of Rome."

When a student in Rome he was surprised to find that the painters there were held in no higher esteem than ordinary trades-

men, although the opportunities offered to artists who wished to study were much better than those of London. He says:—

“At the Pope’s Academy, where I attend, the human figure is every day in the week, holidays excepted, free for any person to draw after without any expense—in the summer at half an hour after five in the morning and in winter after nightfall—two hours each time; near which are many large galleries erected for pictures and statues, where people may at any time study, but it has this disadvantage, that the pictures are not allowed to be taken down nor scaffolds to be made. The light, however, is very good and as well contrived as possible for the benefit of study. . . . I am under the direction of Pompeo Battoni, from whom I shall hope to get some furtherance in drawing; but I shall look after the Old Masters for those things that require most study.”

Peters wrote to the same correspondent, sixteen months later, from Florence:—

“I am returned these few months from Rome, where I resided about a year, principally under Pompeo Battoni, but as the practice of a portrait painter requires a different study from that of history I was recommended to pass my principal time in Tuscany and Lombardy, which I have found to be most to my purpose; as I have more agreeable studies and not interrupted with those dissensions which, I am sorry to observe, seem more universally to prevail among the artists of our country than with those of any others. Our students in Rome are initiated into that manner of life which they afterwards lead in London, the ill effects of which we have often lamented together.”

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Robert Strange the engraver; His quarrels with Allan Ramsay and others; "That strange fellow Strange's strange book"; Was he illiterate? "A Neptune attended by Tridents"; Strange's knighthood; Barry challenges Raphael; William Blake on a picture by Barry; "Equal to Raphael or Michael Angelo or any of the Italians"; Romney returns to London; The house in Cavendish Square; His portrait of Burke; Letter from the Duke of Richmond; Sir Joshua sends his portrait to Florence; Enthusiastic reception; Scene in the Uffizi Gallery; The A.R.A. elections in 1776; List of Candidates; Copley elected; George III on the Declaration of American Independence; Alexander and J. R. Cozens; Their connection with the Academy; The Academy charities; Errors in the earlier R.A. catalogues; Their cause; Attempts at improvement; Letter from Sir Joshua.

IN 1775 the world of art in London was stirred by the publication of the pamphlet written by Robert Strange the engraver, the *Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts* which I have mentioned more than once in the preceding chapters. Strange in this pamphlet brings many charges against the Academicians, some of which may be just, but he injures his case by emphasizing his personal grievances almost as if they were matters of national importance. He refers also to his quarrels of many years earlier about the engraving of Allan Ramsay's portraits of Lord Bute, and of Prince George, afterwards George the Third. As Ramsay's patron and supporter, Lord Bute was regarded as an enemy by Strange who implies that he had been persecuted by him and that one of his instruments in the persecution was Richard Dalton, the King's Librarian and the Antiquary to the Royal Academy. It was Dalton who induced Bartolozzi to come to England, and the appointment of the Italian to membership of the Royal Academy, an honour that was not bestowed upon Strange, was one of the Scotsman's chief grounds of complaint. Naturally the pamphlet was read by Sir William Chambers, the originator of the Royal Academy, and his opinion of it, given in a letter to Lord Charlemont, is not without interest:—

"I find," he says, "your Lordship has seen that strange fellow Strange's strange book; it is strange it should have found its way to Dublin. Some answers to it have appeared in the papers but none, I believe, by any of the Academicians, nor doth it seem to me worth answering. It is the production of a crazed head, an effusion of pride and malevolence, the more

unpardonable as the author ought to have been hanged, anno Forty-five, and only lives to tell his tale by the clemency of the King's family, whom he now attempts to traduce."

Robert Strange, it should be explained, was in his youth a Jacobite, and the lover of a beautiful girl, afterwards his wife, who is said to have saved him from arrest by the King's troops and from almost certain execution, by concealing him beneath her spacious hooped skirt. Chambers says he believes that none of the Academicians answered Strange's pamphlet, but it was vigorously attacked in the *Morning Post*, if not by them certainly for them, and by some one who was intimately acquainted with Strange's history and surroundings. This attack was occasionally brutal where it touched upon the poverty of the engraver's youth, but it was able and humorous, and its ironical comments on the exaggerated importance which Strange attaches to his affairs are worth quoting. The writer commences by an unkind reference to the illiteracy of the catalogue of the collection of Old Masters which Strange disposed of before he left England for the Continent in the year of the publication of the pamphlet:—

"Though I am neither artist nor Academician, Associate nor Dilettante yet I had a strong curiosity to peruse a work wrote by the author of a catalogue of pictures lately sold at Christie's where among other things equally curious we are told of a *she-boar* defending her young and of a Neptune attended by *tridents*.

"Instead, however, of finding room for criticism in this work I found in it matter of much consolation. O! had it been published ten years ago how many anxious hours might it have saved me when I used to sit night after night over the London evening paper sighing, and saying to myself 'now, perhaps is the fatal moment when Lord Bute and his deluded master are putting the finishing stroke to the treaty which is to bring in the Pope and the Pretender, with their associate the Devil.' Yet all the time, as this well informed author assures us, not a single thing have they been doing but (in concert with one Dalton) contriving means to work his ruin, and all this, forsooth, because he refused to engrave their pictures when, like Bob Morris, he had something else to do!

"To what excessive lengths this persecution has been carried those who have read the pamphlet need not be informed of. By it we learn that Mr. Dalton was despatched to Italy merely

to watch and frustrate the views of this illustrious artist, that he engaged one Bartolozzi an engraver to come and reside in London on purpose to oppose him. This act of injustice our author loudly complains of, being of opinion that as he did not choose to work for the King no other body had a right to attempt it. It likewise appears from this valuable performance that the Royal Academy was instituted with no other view than to oppress him; and that engravings and drawings were refused in its exhibitions only because he engraved and drew; whereas had merit been attended to in the institution he would now have sat smiling in Sir Joshua's easy chair. . . . The unfortunate man whose fame has been blasted and whose fortunes have been ruined by a vile triumvirate, is retiring to France with a fortune of £20,000, which he has acquired by the sale of his prints and the show of his pictures amongst this stupid and ungrateful people, who, he says, do not deserve that a man of genius should live among them, because they are totally blind to merit."

This is followed by allegations of vanity and ingratitude, and by abuse of the picture which the engraver, fortified by the written opinion of the Bohemian painter, Anton Rafael Mengs, exhibited at his house as a Raphael, "richly framed, covered with a silk curtain, and railed in to preserve it from being damaged by the crowd." Strange, who appears to have made no reply to this attack, triumphed in the end and secured the Royal favour so completely that he was knighted, and was allotted rooms at Buckingham House in which to engrave a picture painted by West for the King, *The Apotheosis of Prince Alfred and Prince Octavius*. These children of George the Third died in extreme youth—Alfred in 1782, when he was two years old, and Octavius in 1783, when he was four—and West's picture was a representation of Octavius joining his brother in heaven. Lady Strange in a letter to her son, written in January, 1787, describes the picture and tells the story of the bestowal of the knighthood:—

"Your dear father has been employed in engraving a most beautiful picture painted by Mr. West, which he liked so much that he was desirous to make a print from it. The picture was painted for his Majesty; it represented two of the children who died. The composition is an angel in the clouds; the first child sitting by the angel, and the other, a most sweet youth, looking up; there are two cherubs at the top and a view of Windsor

at the bottom. This print was lately finished, and Friday the 5th curr. was appointed for your father's presenting some proofs from it to his Majesty. He went with them to the Queen's house and had a most gracious reception. His Majesty was very much pleased. After saying many flattering things, he said, 'Mr. Strange, I have another favour to ask of you.' Your father was attentive and his Majesty said, 'It is that you will attend the levee on Wednesday or Friday, that I may confer on you the honour of knighthood.' His Majesty left the room, but coming quickly back, said, 'I'm going immediately to St. James's, if you'll follow me I'll do it now, the sooner the better!' So, calling one of the pages he gave him orders to conduct Mr. Strange to St. James's where, kneeling down, he rose up Sir Robert Strange."

When Robert Strange was shaking the dust of England from his feet in 1775, James Barry, his equal in the capacity for making enemies and his superior in self-confidence, was embarking on a more ambitious flight than any he had yet attempted. One of the two works he sent to the Royal Academy was *Pandora—a Drawing from Hesiod*, and a letter written by him at the time of the opening of the exhibition, shows that this drawing was the preliminary design for a picture intended as a challenge to Raphael, who in Barry's opinion succeeded best in "the middle walk of characters," Apostles, Philosophers and so forth, and was ill-qualified to paint the Gods. Barry, however, generously offers excuses for the failure of the Italian when dealing with the nobler subjects. He says:—

"Raphael had not sufficient material to work upon in the higher sphere. Some of the finest antique statues were not yet discovered in his time, and even of such as were, men had not yet fully digested their opinions about them, as the treasures of Greek learning which only could have afforded light into these matters, were as yet almost unopened. It is no wonder therefore that in the whole range of deities in his History of Cupid and Psyche he has mistaken and improperly treated almost every one of them. . . . Yet his work of Cupid and Psyche, though it be wanting in these and other particulars, abounds with that divine fire and enthusiasm which will ever make it regarded as one of the noblest productions of modern art. Thus much premised, I must tell you that whether from an ill-grounded vanity or from a worthier motive (no matter which)

ROMNEY AT CAVENDISH SQUARE

I feel a strong desire to try my own skill and strength with this picture of Raphael. Hesiod has furnished me with a parallel subject which is indeed more interesting and full of action than that of Raphael from Apuleius. It is Pandora, or the heathen Eve, brought into the assembly of the Gods."

That Barry should desire to measure himself with Raphael is amazing, but not more so than that Blake, in a note written in his copy of Malone's *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, should place him on a level with the famous Umbrian:—"Barry painted for Burke a picture equal to Raphael or Michael Angelo or any of the Italians. Burke used to show this picture to his friends and say 'I gave twenty guineas for this horrible daub, if anyone would give . . .'" The part of the margin containing the rest of the sentence has been cut away at some time when the volume was rebound.

Until the end of his life Barry's thoughts and hopes were more or less centred on the elaborate composition of many figures in the painting of which he hoped to rival Raphael. The fate of the great canvas that bore the impression of these ideas will be described in a later chapter.

Soon after the close of the Academy exhibition at which the sketch of the *Pandora* was shown, Romney returned from Italy and took the house and studio in Cavendish Square formerly tenanted by that fashionable portrait painter, Francis Cotes. Romney arrived in London in the summer of 1775 and according to his son John:—

"He took possession of his new abode at Christmas, and was ready to enter upon business with the new year, 1776; he soon, however, began to perceive that the apprehensions he had entertained were not without foundation, for some weeks did certainly elapse before he met with any employment, and ruin was beginning to stare him in the face when at length the Duke of Richmond, not forgetful of the encouragement he had previously given him, came to sit for his portrait."

But a letter from the Duke of Richmond to Burke proves that Romney was in residence at Cavendish Square earlier than his biographer supposed. It was not at Christmas but probably soon after his return from Italy that he took Cotes' house, as this letter shows that in November he was settled in it, with his name on the door, and had already half finished the Duke's portrait:—

"GOODWOOD, *Saturday night*.
November 25, 1775.

MY DEAR BURKE

When you promised to sit for your picture to Mr. Romney you only desired not to begin it till after you had got rid of your conciliatory motion. I doubt not but you have now some other business of great importance on your hands; but if I wait for your picture till you have nothing to do I am likely to go without it. In the midst of business a little relaxation is of use, but I have thought of a method even to reconcile your business with this sitting, which is by having Mr. Romney to take your portrait while you are reading or writing, whichever you like best. I know that some painters have a nonsensical jargon that such attitudes throw a shadow on the face, lose a part of it, and particularly the eyes, which are so necessary to the countenance, but in truth all this is not founded and is meant more to flatter the sitter than for any real purpose.

Romney has half finished one of me, which, for my own conveniency, I chose to have reading, and although the *brilliancy* of the eyes is lost I believe you will think it a good and like portrait when you see it.

I think a portrait of you, merely looking one in the face and doing nothing, can never be like, as it must give a representation so different from your real nature. I wish therefore to have your portrait doing something. The art of speaking can never be well painted, especially in a single figure. Writing will I think, do very well, and will suit you exceedingly. Pray therefore call at Mr. Romney's in Cavendish Square (his name is on the door) and begin. I beg the size may be that which is commonly called a head, and that it may be doing something. Pray tell Mr. Romney my wishes in this respect.

Adieu, believe me ever your most sincere and faithful humble servant,

RICHMOND."

Burke's name is mentioned only once in the diary of Romney's sitters edited by Humphry Ward and W. Roberts. This is on the 2nd of April, 1776, on which day they suggest that the portrait commissioned by the Duke of Richmond was finished. The canvas itself seems to have disappeared, but an engraving of Burke's portrait shows that Romney did not after all paint him reading or

SIR JOSHUA AT THE UFFIZI

writing. The portrait of the Duke, unfinished when the letter was written, is now at Goodwood and represents him reading a book. The reference to the "conciliatory motion" in the Duke's letter indicates that he must have had the portrait of Burke in his mind before Romney's return from Italy. Burke's famous speech in the House of Commons, made in the hope of improving the relations between the American people and the British Government, was delivered on the 22nd of March, 1775.

In this year (the year in which Romney returned to London to become the rival of Reynolds and Gainsborough) Sir Joshua was gaining honours in a far distant field. In Florence, by the invitation of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, his portrait was placed in the Uffizi Gallery.

This was the portrait that Wilkie saw fifty years afterwards and was astonished to find still unvarnished, "without cracks, and in surface as perfect as the day it was painted." Northcote refers to the high appreciation of it by the Florentines, whose enthusiastic reception of the work of the English painter is also described in a long and interesting letter addressed to Angelica Kauffman by one of the assistant Keepers of the Gallery, Signor Luigi Siries, who writes as follows:—

"We have received with the greatest pleasure and admiration the invaluable portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and there never departed from the island of Great Britain a more precious work than this; a well understood management of a great body of colour, and an extraordinary force and effect of light and shadow which by an enchanting magic makes the picture appear more than alive. These are not my words but the echo which reverberates from every part of the Arno and in various manners resounds the praises of the hand which is destined to eternise heroes and give additional lustre to the fine arts.

"You who have been in Italy have seen in what manner the devotees run in crowds to a church where there is a miraculous image, some kneeling, others in profound meditation, others again running with eagerness to kiss the object of their adoration. Such is the concourse of the dilettanti running to the Royal Gallery. On one side you might see the proud humbled, and on the other a studious group reflecting, whilst others cannot contain themselves from embracing the image. Zoffany, amongst others, could not refrain from running to

embrace the portrait of Reynolds. It is arrived at that pitch that the Keeper is forced to be upon his guard that the admirers in their enthusiasm do not touch a work of so great value.

"Who would have thought, Signora Angelica, that the portraits of so many great artists as are in the gallery should appear little in the presence of a modern portrait? And, as a very judicious critic observed, it has likewise given a great blow to the moderns and has quite eclipsed the portrait of Mengs, *who boasted of standing the first*. At present it is no longer so; we begin to see what we did not observe before that his figure wants animation and appears hard and disagreeable. I, who foresaw what would happen, contrived to place the portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds near to that of Mengs which had been placed (by his own desire) under that of Raphael, and I would recommend this device for the portrait of Sir Joshua, *aspersit superbos*. You, who see every day the works of Sir Joshua will not be surprised when I tell you this truth, that his portrait has acquired additional lustre by being seen in comparison with the works of those great artists collected together in this room, which room is itself unique in the whole world.

"It now remains that I acquaint you in confidence that his Royal Highness thinks of giving in return some token of his gratitude to Sir Joshua Reynolds by sending him a medal of gold or some other mark of favour such as he is accustomed to present to those professors of science whom he chooses to distinguish. But would you think it, the Grand Duke has not done it from his doubting whether it would be acceptable or not! You will therefore, in your own agreeable manner when you write to me, hint what is to be done, which answer will be shown to the first Minister. All that I have to say more is this; that as Sir Joshua will naturally answer the letter which he has received from the Director of the Gallery, Signor Pelli, he will be pleased to take care that it corresponds with the letter which he shall favour me with, and if he pleases his letter to the Director may be enclosed in mine, which will probably be shown to our Sovereign."

The Grand Duke of Tuscany duly forwarded the marks of his favour to which Signor Siries refers, and Reynolds afterwards acknowledged their receipt by writing to Signor Pelli a letter of which the following is a slightly abbreviated translation:—

COPLEY ELECTED AN ASSOCIATE

"MOST ESTEEMED SIR

I should have replied at once to your not less elegant than kind letter of March 25th last, if I had not been expecting the medals from day to day. At last they have arrived and I can do nothing but thank most respectfully the Royal giver who has thus deigned to place my name among those of the Professors of the Belli Arti.

Will you be kind enough, most distinguished Sir, to express my heartfelt gratitude to his Highness for his exceeding magnanimity, and to express in the most sincere manner that such goodness and condescension will for all time ensure devotion towards my liberal benefactor. And you then—my dear Signor Pelli, will you please suggest to me some way in which I may be able to show you how much I am obliged to you for the great trouble you have taken in helping me. I do not wish our happy friendship and correspondence to come to an end without my declaring to you with all the sincerity and respect possible that I desire to show myself in every way,

Most distinguished Sir

Your most humble and affectionate Servant

JOSHUA REYNOLDS."

Although no Associates were nominated when the Royal Academy was founded in 1768, provision was made for the appointment of a number of painters, sculptors, architects and engravers of the junior class, and the desire to obtain membership increased with the advance of the institution in power and importance. In 1776 no fewer than twenty-two artists put their names down as candidates for the two Associateships then vacant. Very few, however, were men of distinction and the names of several are unknown to-day except to students of the art of that period. The candidates of 1776 were:—George Cuitt; Thomas Leverton; Sir George Chalmers; J. Cleveley, Junior; Edward Oram; James Nixon; Thomas Hardwick; James Gandon; Thomas Hickey; Robert Davy; John Kitchingman; James Alves; William Parry; John Singleton Copley; William Burgess; John Soane; William Moss; Benjamin Diemar; Thomas Holloway; John Robert Cozens; William Ashford and Joseph Ceracci.

The successful men were the painter William Parry, a pupil of Sir Joshua's and the son of a famous blind harper; and John Singleton Copley, who, after a period of study on the Continent,

had recently settled in London, where he was to pass the remainder of his life. Copley, whose progress in painting in America had been extraordinary considering the conditions in which he worked, had come to London with a reputation that was already assured. His exhibited pictures were admired by English artists, and in America he had practised successfully for some years as a portrait painter, working in New York, as Dunlap says, "for the rich and fashionable," and with such success that he was able to wear on occasion a suit of crimson velvet with gold buttons. Copley in his younger days seems to have liked rich clothes, for when he is studying in Italy he writes to tell his wife that he is ordering a suit of black velvet lined with crimson satin. "This," he says, "is the taste throughout Tuscany, and to-day I bought some lace ruffles and silk stockings."

It is curious that the first election of an American member of the Royal Academy should have taken place in 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence; and more curious still that Benjamin West—the only American painter among the original members of the Academy—should have been with George the Third at the time the news of the Declaration reached London. Many years afterwards Samuel Morse, the inventor of the electro-magnetic telegraph, called at West's house and found the old artist engaged in making a replica of his portrait of the King. West told him that the portrait he was copying was painted in 1776, soon after the Declaration of Independence, and that the King was sitting to him when the news arrived. Morse asked him how it was received. West replied that the King was at first agitated and then sat silent and thoughtful. "Well," he said at last, "if they cannot be happy under my government I hope they may not change it for a worse. I wish them no ill."

Of the unsuccessful candidates for the A.R.A. in 1776, three call for notice. Sir George Chalmers was a baronet who inherited a title but nothing else, for the family estates had been sequestered in one of the Jacobite risings, and Sir George, who was the pupil of Allan Ramsay, was obliged to support himself by his brush as best he could. He was a frequent exhibitor, but apparently not a successful artist, as later in life he was obliged to appeal to the Academy for assistance, which was given to him on several occasions. Joseph Ceracchi was the Italian sculptor whose statue of Mrs. Damer stands in the vestibule of the British Museum, not far from Roubiliac's Shakespeare. To quote Walpole's catalogue

ROYAL ACADEMY CHARITIES

notes once more:—"This young statuary was excellent, but getting into debt went off suddenly. He being struck with the graceful, nymph-like form of Mrs. Damer, daughter of General Conway, begged her to sit to him, and he made a most charming statue of her, whole length as large as life, in terra cotta, which her father bought. She learned to model of him, and modelled busts in great perfection, to which she always had a turn, modelling them in wax in the manner of Gosset." Ceracchi also produced what Northcote declares to be the only bust in marble of Sir Joshua Reynolds, a bust that is now the property of the Royal Academy. He left England as Walpole says "suddenly" and after an adventurous career was guillotined as one of the principals in an attempt to assassinate Bonaparte.

A more interesting candidate than Ceracchi was John Robert Cozens, the famous landscape painter whose work influenced both Turner and Constable. It is odd that he should figure in the list, for he exhibited only one picture at the Academy and no one who has written about him seems to have suspected that he ever desired a more intimate connection with the institution. He received no votes at the election of 1776 and his name does not appear on subsequent lists, but his father, Alexander Cozens, who was for some years drawing master at Eton, was a candidate in 1778 and again in 1779, and received two votes on the first occasion and three on the second.

After the election of 1779 nothing more is said in the minutes about the elder Cozens, but the name of his son occurs later as a pensioner of the Royal Academy, which was no less generous to those in need than the Incorporated Society had been in the heyday of its prosperity.

Martha Lely and Mrs. Monamy, who, as we have seen, were helped by the Society, received gratuities from the Academy in its first year of activity, but Sir Frederick Eaton was mistaken when he stated in *The Royal Academy and its Members* that the widow of another and greater artist, Mrs. Hogarth, was one of the beneficiaries of 1769. Mrs. Hogarth received nothing from the Academy until 1787, nearly twenty years after its foundation, when a pension of forty pounds was bestowed upon her.

Gerhard Bockman, helped by the Academy in and after 1770, had been one of Sir Godfrey Kneller's assistants and was practising as a portrait painter long before Reynolds was born. Bockman, who lived to be eighty-seven, died in Grays Inn Lane

in 1773, when his widow applied for and received relief. Others assisted by the Academy in its earlier years included David Morier, painter; Dr. Johnson's old friend Isaac de Groot; Mary Fitchbourn, a niece of Vanaken the drapery painter; the daughters of Vertue's friend Gibson; Philip Mercier, who was perhaps the son of Philip Mercier the portrait painter to Frederick, Prince of Wales; John Foldstone, father of the miniaturist, Mrs. Mee, to whom in his youth Lawrence is said to have paid attention; Henry Morland, the father of George Morland; and Mary Ware, daughter of Isaac Ware the architect. In one instance money from the charitable fund was sent to America, in answer to an appeal from the widow of Robert Edge Pine, who died in Philadelphia in 1788. The minutes of 1790 mention a letter from Mrs. Pine, then living in Philadelphia, thanking the Academicians for their remittances and hoping for the favour of their future notice.

Northcote hints that the Academy was imposed upon by some of its pensioners and says that when he was on the Council some of the applications for aid were of the most impudent kind. In one of the letters which he saw, the writer asked for charity "because it was not convenient at that time to sell out of the Funds"!

No one who is well acquainted with the Royal Academy catalogues of the eighteenth century can have failed to notice the numerous errors made by their compilers. These errors, however, were due less to carelessness than to the want of order and discipline at the Academy which permitted artists to deviate from the rules and to send in their works almost when they chose. The minutes of the period show that indulgences in the shape of extension of time were frequently given, and to outsiders as well as to members of the Academy. Gainsborough was a great offender in this respect. He was usually behindhand with his work and he asked for and obtained extension of time in every year with one exception from 1778 to 1784. Angelica Kauffman was given a period of grace in 1778, "her pictures not being dry"; and so lax were the rules that Hoppner in 1784, long before he became an Associate, was allowed to take his pictures home again "to finish," after they had been accepted.

Of such indulgences as these, errors in the catalogues were the inevitable consequence, and how frequent they were can be judged from the comments that appeared in the newspapers. The writer of a letter published in the *Morning Chronicle* of May 2nd, 1776,

ERRORS IN THE CATALOGUES

complains that although the Council of the Royal Academy states each season that after a certain date no works will be received, the rule is completely ignored:—

“Those in authority have assumed to themselves the liberty of breaking in upon this rule and have indeed this year carried their infringements of good order to such an extreme degree of indecent irregularity, that some of the places allotted for their pictures were vacant at the time their Majesties condescended to honour the Exhibition with their presence; nor perhaps until the very day that it was opened to the public were the arrangements completed. Now it is evident that until all the performances appear and are marked with their proper numbers in their alphabetical order their titles cannot with accuracy be annexed in the catalogue, which therefore must be incorrect in proportion to that irregularity of management.”

This critic of the Academy further asserts that in consequence of the irregularities to which he draws attention, the first edition of the catalogue contains numerous mistakes both in the numerical and alphabetical orders, and in the titles of the pictures; and that, worst of all, the names of some of the exhibiting artists have been omitted altogether. “I ask,” he says, in conclusion, “whether the public have not a right to have these false catalogues which have been so copiously given out, exchanged for the corrected edition?”

Unfortunately even the “corrected” editions sometimes remained imperfect in the earlier years of the Academy, and in 1783 neither the number nor title of Gainsborough’s portrait of Lady Horatia Waldegrave is included in any catalogue of the year that I have seen. It is likely that Gainsborough was responsible for this error in the first place, by sending the portrait in late; and the pernicious practice of receiving pictures at the eleventh hour was no doubt responsible for the lists of “Omitted” titles that figure at the end of some of the eighteenth-century catalogues. These have led to further errors, for William Sandby, the author of the *History of the Royal Academy of Arts*, by a strange misapprehension regarded them, not as lists of omitted titles, but as lists of excluded pictures. For example, in describing the exhibition of 1773, he says:—“Three hundred and fifty-nine works were hung; and twenty-six excluded, nine of these being the productions of Academicians and one of them a full-length portrait of a lady by Reynolds.” All the twenty-six, of course, were exhibited in 1773

and the full length by Reynolds (of Mrs. Parker) is mentioned by Walpole in his notes on the Academy of that year. Fulcher also, when writing his biography of Gainsborough, took the "Omitted" lists to refer to excluded pictures and his catalogue of Gainsborough's exhibited works is therefore imperfect.

In the earlier catalogues the artists' names were given in alphabetical order and beneath each name was a list of the works shown by the exhibitor. But as these works were not hung in groups but were scattered about the gallery the numeration was not consecutive and sometimes it was difficult for those who wished to see particular pictures to discover their positions on the walls. Complaints were made of this, and in 1775 a correspondent of the *Public Advertiser* asked if it would not be possible to make the arrangement of the pictures agree with the catalogue:

"that is, after the pieces are properly placed in the room, then to number them progressively, beginning with numbers 1, 2, etc., at the left hand entrance of the room and continuing the following numbers round the room as contiguous to each other as convenience will admit."

The plan seemed so desirable and so simple that the Academicians would have tried it, had it not been for the opposition of the printer who declared that if he had to wait for the completion of the exhibition before beginning to set up his type it would be impossible to prepare the catalogue in time for the private view.

It is likely that the correspondent of the *Public Advertiser* who suggested the alteration was Caleb Whitefoord, who supplied that journal with occasional notes on art and was a friend of Sir Joshua, for the President wrote to him saying that the scheme was impracticable unless they could find a printer who could do the work more quickly. The printer and editor of the *Public Advertiser* at this time was Henry S. Woodfall, the publisher of *The Letters of Junius*, and the President's letter to Whitefoord shows that he thought Woodfall might be able to assist the Academy. Sir Joshua says:—

"The scheme of hanging the pictures numerically is frustrated, from the information the printer has given us, that after he has received the copy of the catalogue it will take a whole week in printing. This is more time than we can afford, for the catalogue cannot be written till all the pictures are hung up and numbered. When the Council adopted the scheme they thought two days were sufficient for the printing. Pray ask

THE HANGING COMMITTEE REPROVED

Mr. Woodfall if he could undertake to deliver us half a dozen impressions within eight and forty hours after he has received the copy? I have sent an old catalogue for him to see about what quantity of printing is required."

Presumably Woodfall was unable to print the catalogues in the time mentioned, for numbering the pictures in the order of their hanging, first suggested in 1775, was not accomplished until 1780. It was not until 1783 that the artists' names in the index were followed by the numbers of their pictures.

The Hanging Committee of 1776 whose infringements of the Academy laws were said to have been chiefly responsible for the errors in the catalogues, was composed of Nathaniel Dance, Penny, Cipriani, Barry and Cosway. The correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle* who reproved them for admitting pictures after the proper date, also complained of what he called the selfish exclusion of numbers of the younger artists to make room for the work of "assuming Academicks and their pupils and adherents." He thought that even Sir Joshua and West (of whom, however, he speaks with respect) had far more than their proper wall-space, which at this time was extremely limited, as the exhibitions were still held in Pall Mall in a single room of no great size. But in the autumn there was promise at an early date of better accommodation and a larger gallery in the reconstructed Somerset House. In the minutes of 1776 it is recorded on October 4th, that "The Treasurer presented the plans for the intended new Royal Academy, which were approved."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Gainsborough's return to the Academy; An Italian artist on his landscape at the exhibition; His "Housemaid" at the National Gallery; Is it Mrs. Graham?; The Castle Howard tradition; The Duchess of Devonshire as a Housemaid; Sale of the Houghton pictures; Wilkes proposes in Parliament that they should be bought to establish a National Gallery; Burke on the grant for the British Museum; "No public money more frugally and faithfully applied"; Women readers in the Museum library; The Duchess of Kingston and Mrs. Macaulay; Sir Joshua attacked in the "Public Advertiser"; Woodfall's apology; Eighteenth-century artists' colourmen; Nathaniel Drake of Long Acre: Price of brushes in 1710; Paints tied in bladder; Keating, colourman in 1749; Sandys, Dicker, Powel in 1763; Richard Gough's dealings with Drake; Punning at Cambridge; John Middleton of St. Martin's Lane; Sir Joshua a customer; Middleton's umbrellas "oiled or unoiled"; His prices for artists' materials in 1785; Turner and Raeburn deal with him; Poole and Brown of Holborn; Some of their customers; Old Brown and Young Brown; Landseer and his monkey; Malpractices of colourmen of the period.

IN 1777 Gainsborough exhibited at the Royal Academy for the first time since 1772. His return was preceded by some negotiations or bargaining with the Council, the exact particulars of which are not recorded in the minutes; and it was heralded by a glowing panegyric in the *Morning Post* in which he was placed before Sir Joshua and hailed as the first painter of the day. Gainsborough's rivalry with the President was henceforth recognized, and was destined to become more acute year by year; and more dangerous because he had now left Bath to settle in London and was able to challenge Reynolds on his own ground. The portraits shown by Gainsborough in this year of his return were universally praised, in particular the full lengths of the Hon. Mrs. Graham, and his friend Abel the musician. He also proved his versatility by exhibiting a large landscape which was one of the sensations of the Academy.

This picture, which Walpole describes as "in the style of Rubens, and by far the finest landscape ever painted in England, and equal to the great masters," was admired not only for its beauty but for the singular originality of its execution. Among those impressed by its uncommon treatment was an Italian artist living or staying in London who described the exhibition of 1777 in several letters addressed to another artist at Rome. He says in one of them:—

A LANDSCAPE BY GAINSBOROUGH

"I ended my letter last Tuesday with justly merited encomiums on Mr. Gainsborough's portrait of Mr. Abel, and promised to say something more of that artist. His large landscape, No. 136, is inimitable. It revives the colouring of Rubens in that line. The scene is grand, the effect of light is striking, the cattle very natural. But what shall I say of the pencilling? I really do not know; it is so new, so original, that I cannot find words to convey any idea of it. I do not know that any artists, living or dead, have managed their pencils in that manner and I am afraid that any attempt to imitate it will be attended with ill success. Were you in London I could only tell you to go and see."

Gainsborough's landscape of 1777, which Walpole praised so extravagantly, was lost to sight after the close of the Academy exhibition and remained untraced until recently, when I discovered that it was acquired (probably at Mrs. Gainsborough's sale of 1797) by Charles Long, who, in an undated letter to George Cumberland, says:—"I have enriched my collection of pictures by the best landscape of Gainsborough I ever saw, and shall be glad to show it to you when you come to town." Charles Long, who was created Lord Farnborough in 1826, and helped to found the National Gallery, gave to it this Gainsborough early in 1827, and I have long known that some of the details of *The Watering Place*, No. 109, correspond roughly with a contemporary description of the work of 1777. But I did not realize that the pictures were identical until recently, when, in looking through the Academy catalogues that once belonged to Joseph Farington, R.A., I found that in the catalogue of 1777 he had written against No. 136, *A Large Landscape*, "Mr. Charles Long's." The picture was, of course, well known to Farington, who must have seen it when it was shown at the Academy and probably made his note at the time it was acquired by Long.

The portrait of Mrs. Graham exhibited in 1777, the well-known full length now at Edinburgh, is the most important of several studies by Gainsborough of that beautiful daughter of Lord Cathcart who was married in 1774 to Thomas Graham, afterwards one of Wellington's generals and known to history as Lord Lynedoch. Mrs. Graham is popularly supposed to have been the original of the interesting unfinished Gainsborough long preserved at Castle Howard, the seat of the Earls of Carlisle, and presented to the National Gallery in 1913 by Rosalind,

Countess of Carlisle. It is, in fact, described in the National Gallery catalogue as *Mrs. Graham as a Housemaid*, but there seems to be no reason for this ascription beyond a certain resemblance between the features of the *Housemaid* and those of Mrs. Graham as shown in the Edinburgh portrait. There is a romantic, but I think impossible story—it was revived when the picture was given to the National Gallery—that Lord Carlisle (the fifth Earl) visited Gainsborough's studio when the *Housemaid* was in progress and was so charmed with the unfinished canvas that he prevailed upon the artist to sell it to him in its present state. This, if it were true, would go far to prove that the *Housemaid* is not Mrs. Graham, for Gainsborough could not have ventured to sell her portrait at any stage unless she was sitting to him as a model. And this, we may assume, was impossible as the lady was the daughter of a Peer and the wife of a wealthy man of good family who was devoted to, and intensely proud of her.

He was so fond of his wife that her early death almost deprived him of reason and it is hard to believe that he would allow any kind of portrait of her to remain unclaimed. If Mrs. Graham were the model for the *Housemaid* it would have been known to Mrs. Gainsborough, who, after her husband's death, sold to the sitters or their relatives as many as she could of his unfinished portraits. These included one of Mrs. Graham's brother, Lord Cathcart, which was offered to and bought by him and is still in the possession of his family. A similar offer would have been made to Graham if a portrait of his wife had been among the unfinished works.

If we may accept Tom Taylor as an authority, the supposed connection between Mrs. Graham and the *Housemaid* is a comparatively modern idea, for according to him the story of the unfinished picture's origin that was in circulation at Castle Howard seventy years ago had no reference to the beautiful original of the Edinburgh portrait. That portrait was included in the famous Art Treasures Exhibition held at Manchester in 1857, and Tom Taylor, who wrote some descriptive articles on the exhibition for the *Manchester Guardian*, was enchanted with what he calls its "bewitching loveliness." In speaking of the Gainsboroughs at Manchester, Taylor recalls the unfinished *Housemaid*, which he had seen at Castle Howard, but does not connect it with the portrait of Mrs. Graham. He mentions the

MRS. GRAHAM AS A HOUSEMAID

Housemaid when criticizing Gainsborough's *Landscape with Children* (161), now the property of Lord Tollemache and called *The Cottage Door*, but in composition unlike the better-known Gainsborough of a similar title. Taylor says that the principal figure in the *Landscape with Children*:—"is identical with the life-size sketch shown at Castle Howard, and said there to be a likeness of one of the housemaids who happened to be sweeping one of the rooms when Gainsborough, rising early, saw her, and, struck with the grace of her action and figure, dashed them hastily upon canvas."

It would be interesting to know when and by whom this large sketch of a girl with a broom was first described as the beginning of a portrait of Mrs. Graham. The sketch is, no doubt, the *Fancy Whole length of a Housemaid, unfinished*, sold by auction for four guineas and a half by Mrs. Gainsborough in 1797. Whether the figure represents Mrs. Graham or one of Lord Carlisle's servants, or whether it is a creature of Gainsborough's imagination, is an open question, but a paragraph in a journal of 1786 suggests that for the idea of the *Housemaid* the artist was indebted to his friend Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire:—

"Devon's beauteous Duchess, whether viewed in domestic life or the blustering scenes of gaiety, is ever irresistible and fascinating. At Lady Hume's masked revelry she assumed the lively Housemaid, and with wit and broom absolutely swept everything before her."

Lady Hume, at whose house in 1786 Gainsborough may have seen the Duchess masquerading as a housemaid, was the wife of a man much interested in art and artists, Sir Abraham Hume, whose portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds hangs in the National Gallery. Reynolds was intimately acquainted with Sir Abraham and bequeathed to him a picture by Claude.

Gainsborough's triumphant reappearance at the Royal Academy in 1777 was almost exactly coincident with a debate in the House of Commons in which, probably for the first time, a proposal was made by a member of Parliament for the establishment of a National Gallery. The member of Parliament was John Wilkes, and the occasion a meeting of the Committee of Supply at which was decided the amount of the annual grant towards the upkeep of the British Museum. The sum set down in the estimates was £3,000, which Burke moved should be increased to £5,000. Burke was supported by Wilkes, who, after

complaining that the Museum with its present income could not afford to keep a proper number of officers or attendants, paid a high compliment to its managers. "No public money," he said, "has ever been more frugally and faithfully applied to the purposes for which it has been given, than what they have received. Perhaps the Trustees of the British Museum are the only body of men who have never been suspected of want of fidelity or economy." However, Burke's motion for increasing the vote to £5,000 was defeated by seventy-four votes to sixty.

The proposal made by Wilkes on this occasion for the establishment of a National Gallery to be contained in the British Museum was connected with the pending sale of the famous Houghton collection of pictures formed by Sir Robert Walpole. The pictures were in the market and Wilkes begged the Government not to let slip this opportunity of acquiring them. We were anxious, he said, to form an English school of artists, and yet the British Museum possessed hardly any valuable paintings. If we were to hope to rival the Italian, Flemish or French schools, our artists must have constantly before their eyes finished works by the greatest masters and the opportunity of obtaining a collection of such works now presented itself:—

"I understand that an application is to be made to Parliament that one of the first collections in Europe, that at Houghton, made by Sir Robert Walpole, of acknowledged superiority to most collections in Italy and scarcely inferior even to that of the Duke of Orleans in the Palais Royal at Paris, may be sold. I hope it may not be dispersed, but purchased by Parliament and added to the British Museum. I wish, Sir, the eye of painting as fully gratified as the ear of music is in this island, which at last bids fair to become a favourite abode of the polite arts. A noble gallery ought to be built in the garden of the British Museum for the reception of this invaluable treasure."

This appeal was followed by a reproof to George the Third, the arch-enemy of Wilkes, for removing the Raphael cartoons from Hampton Court Palace to Buckingham House, St. James's Park, which His Majesty had recently purchased from Sir Charles Sheffield:—

"Such an important acquisition as the Houghton collection would in some degree alleviate the concern which every man of taste now feels at being deprived of seeing those prodigies

WILKES AND A NATIONAL GALLERY

of art, the Cartoons of the divine Raphael. King William, although a Dutchman, really loved and understood the polite arts. He built the princely suite of apartments at Hampton Court on purpose for the reception of those heavenly guests. The nation at large were then admitted to the rapturous enjoyment of their beauties. They remained there until this reign. At present they are perishing in a late Baronet's smoky house at the end of a great smoky town.

"They are entirely secluded from the public eye, yet, Sir, they were purchased with public money before the accession of the Brunswick line, not brought from Herrenhausen. Can there be, Sir, a greater mortification to any gentleman of taste than to be thus deprived of feasting his delighted view with what he most admired, and had always considered as the pride of our Island, as an invaluable national treasure, as a common blessing, not as private property. The Kings of France and Spain permit their subjects the view of all the pictures in their collections."

In another passage of his speech Wilkes pleaded for a reconsideration of the rejected scheme of 1775 for the decoration of the interior of St. Paul's Cathedral by Sir Joshua Reynolds and other artists. It had been abandoned owing to the opposition of Terrick, Bishop of London, who had since been succeeded by a prelate of wider views whose consent, he thought, might now be obtained. The Government ought to support such a scheme as this, and support too the growing school of engravers and the workers in the industrial arts. "I hope, hereafter," he said, "even in this cold, raw climate, to be warmed with the glowing colours of our own Gobelins tapestry, and I wish encouragement was given by Parliament to that noble manufacture which in France almost rivals the powers of painting."

Nothing came of the plans of Wilkes for the encouragement of the arts. The Houghton pictures went to Russia, and his speech in support of Burke's motion indicates that the refusal to enlarge the Parliamentary grant was chiefly responsible for the extremely limited facilities accorded to those members of the public who wished to examine the treasures of the infant British Museum. At this time only sixty visitors a day were admitted, and these were shown through the rooms in parties of ten. An hour was allotted to each party and as no individual was allowed to linger or to lose touch with the guide, the Museum was of little

use to the ordinary man in the eighteenth century. No doubt it was valuable to students from the beginning, and to women as well as to men. Mrs. Macaulay, the historian, who was teased by Johnson for her tendency to republicanism, was busy among the books and manuscripts, with an amanuensis to help her, as early as 1763; and in the same year another woman who was destined to figure prominently in the eyes of the public, made application to the Trustees for what corresponds to the reader's ticket of to-day. This was—of all people in the world—that Elizabeth Chudleigh who was afterwards the defendant in a notorious trial before the House of Lords in 1776, that resulted in the invalidation of her marriage to the Duke of Kingston and her conviction for bigamy. Dr. Birch in a letter of 1763 says of Miss Chudleigh:—"She came with the Duke of Kingston to see the Museum and then applied for permission to study there."

Sir Joshua, hardly pressed by Gainsborough at the exhibition of 1777, was the subject in the same year of some anonymous newspaper attacks that were partly connected with his office, for then, as now, the Royal Academy had many enemies, and the President was the chief target for the darts of the critics. Others were reflections upon the instability of his colouring, which in 1777 was still the subject of frequent sarcastic paragraphs and verses; and these reflections were occasionally accompanied by wholly unjustifiable charges of self-advertisement. One of the most scurrilous of these libels appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, headed, "On reading some adulatory verses to a certain celebrated Knight of the Brush. An Epigram":—

"When R . . . s with incessant Puff
Bedaubs himself with nauseous stuff,
I think the Man is Mad.
Self Adulation should confine
Her Breath to him who paints a sign,
Because his works are bad.

But that this Lord of *gaudy tints*
Should trust his fame to DAILY PRINTS
I own I can't forgive. . . .
'Hold there' a surly Critic cried,
'The tints and papers coincide,
Alike they're FUGITIVE.' "

A LIBEL ON SIR JOSHUA

Sir Joshua, fortunately, was well supplied with literary friends, one of whom took the quarrel up, and in the same journal, three or four days afterwards, a reply appeared in which the critic of the great painter was duly castigated:—

“And dost thou think, thou scribbling elf,
Or is it downright lying,
That worthy Reynolds puffs himself
Both sense and shame defying?

He scorns to act so vile a part,
Thy part we well divine,
How ill, poor Bard, thou read'st *his* heart,
How legible is thine!

His fame throughout the world shall fly,
Thine is a passing vapour,
His works with Time alone shall die,
Thine with a daily paper.”

Caleb Whitefoord, on behalf of Sir Joshua, wrote to Woodfall of the *Public Advertiser* to protest against the publication of “An Epigram,” and Woodfall said it was inserted without his knowledge and that he did not know it had appeared until he opened the letter containing the reply. Woodfall declared that Sir Joshua was one of the last persons he should think of attacking, and assured his correspondent that in future “the *Public Advertiser* shall not be disgraced by lines, letters or paragraphs in abuse of a gentleman of his worth and abilities.”

Both the attack and reply appear to have interested Walpole, for he pasted cuttings of the two sets of verses into his Academy catalogue for 1777. The signature to the reply, “An Artist,” is the same that was attached to the letter of 1773, the writer of which took the side of Reynolds against “Fabius Pictor,” and hinted that “Fabius Pictor” was none other than James Barry.

However, there is nothing in the attack of 1777 that points to any connection with Barry, who in this year commenced the painting of those pictures in the great room of the Society of Arts upon which his reputation rests. Barry's agreement with the Society of Arts provided that he should be at no expense for models, upon whom a considerable sum was expended, or for colours and other materials; and a note in the Society's minutes

for March, 1777, states that Mr. Drake has promised to supply the "canvas on stretched frames," for the pictures for the sum of one hundred pounds. This note is interesting as an early record of a transaction in which the name of a London artists' colourman is mentioned.

Biographers of the artists of the eighteenth century do not tell us much of the men from whom they purchased their paints, canvases and brushes. Of those who supplied Sir Joshua and Romney we know little, and Gainsborough left no record in which the name of his colourman is mentioned. We owe to Dr. George C. Williamson the discovery that Cosway dealt with the still-existing firm of Newman, whose shop was then in Gerrard Street, Soho, close to that haunt of artists, the Turk's Head; and it is known that Richard Wilson bought his brushes at the same establishment. But Wilson's account with Newman must have been modest for his biographer, Wright, states, apparently in good faith, that when painting in oil "he used but one brush"!

Northcote, in a passage that has been quoted by many other writers, says that when Kneller came to this country in 1674 he brought with him a man whose sole employment was to prepare his colours and materials. "Kneller afterwards set him up as a colourmaker for artists; and this man's success, he being the first who kept a colour shop in London, occasioned the practice of it as a trade." Northcote adds that until Kneller's man commenced business, English artists were compelled to grind and prepare their own colours, but this statement is of more than doubtful accuracy. Sir Charles Eastlake, who went deeper into the subject, believed that long before Kneller came to England there were persons employed here exclusively in the manufacture of painters' materials. Certainly Kneller's man, if it be true that he was the first in the business, must soon have found many imitators; for John Smith in his book on oil painting published in 1687 speaks of artists' colourmen as if they were common in London, and says that those of his readers who do not care to be at the trouble of grinding their own colours can obtain any sort or quantity from the shops, ready ground and at reasonable prices.

At these colour shops brushes and pencils of all kinds could also be obtained.

"The largest brushes will cost sixpence, the other sizes from fourpence to one penny apiece. The largest sort of pencils,

ARTISTS' COLOURMEN

made with fine hair, either in tin cases or in wooden stocks, from eight to twopence apiece. Those enclosed in swan's quills a penny apiece, and others in goose or duck's quills are sixpence a dozen, one with another, or a halfpenny apiece."

The prepared colours were no doubt tied up like little puddings, in pieces of bladder, as described by another writer on painting about 1710. After mentioning the principal colours in use at that time, he says:—

"Note that they are all to be bought ready ground at the colour shops in London, tied up in bits of bladders and of about the bigness of walnuts; and are done much finer and cleaner (and almost as cheap) than anyone can possibly do them himself. All painters generally have them thus."

Although John Smith does not say in what the colour shops of 1687 enclosed their paints, he lays stress on the necessity of keeping them tied in bladder and tells a curious little story to show how long they could be preserved in that condition.

"I remember," he says, "I had a parcel of colours given to me in the year 1661, by a neighbouring yeoman, that were, as he said, left at his house by a trooper that quartered there in the time of the wars, about 1644. This man was by profession a picture-drawer and his colours were all tied up in bladders according to the method before prescribed, and when I had opened them I found them in a very good condition, and to my thinking as fit for use when mixed with a little fresh oil as if they had been but very lately ground, though they had remained in this state about seventeen years."

It is disappointing that Smith tells us no more of this soldier "picture-drawer" who loved painting so well that he carried its materials with him even when campaigning. Was he killed fighting for the King or Parliament that he never returned to claim the colours he had left with the yeoman?

Paints were kept in bladder by most artists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and until about 1840, when the convenient metal tubes, now in common use, were adopted. To extract the paint from the bladder the artist pricked it with a sharp tack, squeezed out what he required, and then pushed the tack in again up to the head to seal the orifice.

Although there can be little doubt that men were making and selling artists' materials in London before Kneller came to this country, I have found no definite statement about a colourman

and his business earlier than 1749, when a writer in *The London Tradesman* mentions Robert Keating of the White Hart in Long Acre, who appears to have done a large trade.

"This gentleman," he says, "deals in all the colours for the housepainter, but his chief business consists in furnishing the liberal painters with their fine colours. A painter may go into his shop and be furnished with every article he uses, such as pencils, brushes, cloths ready for drawing on, and all manner of colours ready prepared, with which he cannot be supplied either in such quality or quantity in any or all the shops in London. He is himself an excellent judge of colours, and has no mean taste in painting."

Keating, who was succeeded at the White Hart by Nathaniel Drake, may have died or retired by 1763, for his name does not occur in a list drawn up that year of the principal of those London tradesmen "whose art consists in mixing and properly preparing the finer colours for the use of the painters, for whom they likewise prepare canvases of all sizes ready stretched on frames, which is quite foreign to the business of the ordinary colour shop." The artists' colourmen mentioned by the writer of this passage are William Dicker, who lived opposite Newport Market; Nathaniel Drake and Charles Sandys, both of Long Acre; and Powel of St. Martin's Lane. An interesting account of Powel's house and curious carved shop-front is to be found in the life of Nollekens by J. T. Smith, who describes this establishment as one of the oldest of its kind in London, and no doubt its one-time owner was the Powel who was supplying Arthur Pond with colours as early as 1734. William Dicker was the owner of "the colour shop in Newport Street" referred to in Fanny Burney's early correspondence. With Sandys it is likely that Reynolds sometimes dealt, as Northcote, in a letter written while he lived with Sir Joshua, mentions "coming home from Sandys the colour man," to whose shop he had apparently been sent by his master.

Nathaniel Drake, as I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, was the colourman who in 1777 supplied the Society of Arts with the canvas for Barry's pictures. Himself a member of the Society of Arts he was described as "Nathan" Drake when he was elected in 1763, and it is probable that he was related to Nathan Drake the painter, of York and Lincoln, who gives as his London address "At Mr. Drake's, colourman, Long Acre," in the cata-

MIDDLETON OF ST. MARTIN'S LANE

logues of the Incorporated Society of Artists. The colourman's name appears in some correspondence between Michael Tyson and Richard Gough the antiquary, in 1772. In November of that year Tyson, writing from the country to Gough in town, says:—

"I have got a fine miniature painting of Mason, which he has lent me and given me leave to copy, but I cannot make use of this advantage as I have no ivory with me. London is the only place I can procure it from. Be so kind as to take the first opportunity of calling at Drake's, colourman, Long Acre, and buying for me three or four pieces of the size I shall mark on the other side, and three or four pieces of a smaller size. Be so good as to see they are perfectly white, and at the same time to send me half a dozen camel-hair pencils of the finest sort for painting on ivory, and also some white that will stand and some black."

Tyson writes in a few days to say that he has received the ivory and the camel-hair brushes, and asks his friend to order more things from Drake, including "a small agate used for grinding the colour on a palette." Gough in his reply, reports:—

"The result of two or three visits to Long Acre since I came to town, is that the agates in question are become so scarce and dear that people now content themselves with a bit of glass or a marble muller to grind the colours on the palette, and Drake says he believes agates cannot be had under four guineas, and it is so fortuitous a thing abroad that he knows not where to send for one. The ivory plates are ready to be sent when I know your determination about the other."

Four guineas was too much for the pocket of the amateur, who tells Gough by return of post:—"Trouble yourself no more about mullers and grinding stones. I do not choose to play at ducks and *drakes* with agates." He adds in excuse—writing from Cambridge—"Punning is the vice of this place."

A prominent colourman of this period, and a rival of Drake's, was John Middleton, who lived in St. Martin's Lane, which is close to Long Acre. Middleton claimed in his advertisements that he had "for many years served the principal artists with their cloths, oils and colours." One of his customers, no doubt, was the first President of the Royal Academy, whose house in Leicester Fields was within a short walk of St. Martin's Lane. This is suggested by a note, published in the *Repository of Arts* some

years after Sir Joshua's death, about the failure of a young artist to obtain satisfactory harmonies from the colours he had chosen to form his palette. "What makes it more provoking," he said, "the little shopwoman at Middleton's in St. Martin's Lane said they were the very colours she used to sell to Sir Joshua Reynolds." The painter, Julius Cæsar Ibbetson, mentions Middleton as a man of great knowledge in his business, and one of the few who could prepare ultramarine properly.

But John Middleton was too enterprising a man to confine himself solely to the manufacture and sale of artists' colours, and in advertisements of 1781 he announces that:—

"... the convenience of umbrellas being now so great as to recommend them to general use, he doth really prepare, make up and sell them, both oiled and unoled, of various sorts. A large assortment of the oiled ones, made up in the winter, are at present so dry as to be free from that stickiness which attends the fresh made. The prices low, when compared with their quality which in every respect is of the best, and the lowest asked at one word."

Of his umbrellas, oiled or unoled, no prices are mentioned by Middleton, but his list of artists' materials, published in 1785, gives an idea of the cost of brushes and colours at a time when Reynolds, Gainsborough and Romney were all practising. The cheapest colours, such as blue black and ivory black, were only threepence a bladder, but raw and burnt sienna, both inexpensive to-day, cost sixpence, which was also the price of the then popular Prussian blue. Ultramarine of a sort could be had at three guineas an ounce, but for his best-quality Middleton asked ten guineas. Blacklead pencils were sixpence each, camel-hair brushes a penny, and fitches twopence. Hog-hair brushes, the ordinary tools of the painter in oil, cost from twopence to a shilling each, according to size. It is remarked of canvases that "in general landscape painters choose their cloths of a very smooth surface. Portrait painters choose a very thin priming." Middleton's colour shop has long since disappeared from St. Martin's Lane, but it remained in existence well into the nineteenth century, when Raeburn and Turner were among its customers. Raeburn speaks of "Mr. Middleton of 81 St. Martin's Lane—the gentleman with whom I deal," in a letter that is in the British Museum. He also dealt with Taylor and Norrie of Edinburgh, at whose shop Wilkie in his youth bought paints

THE BROWNS OF HOLBORN

and brushes, but it is probable that Taylor and Norrie were only agents for some London firm, not artists' colourmen proper.

Another well-known shop of which no trace now remains was that of Brown in High Holborn. In 1842 the head of the firm, Thomas Brown, claimed that he, his father, and his father's predecessor, had between them supplied all the painter-Presidents up to that time, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West, Sir Thomas Lawrence and Sir Martin Archer Shee; and that they had been the favoured servants of the Royal Academy since its foundation in Pall Mall in 1768.

The predecessor of the Browns was named Poole, the "Poole, colourman, beginning of Holborn," who is mentioned by Sir Joshua in his pocket-books. An advertisement in a newspaper of 1786 announces that Swiss crayons can be obtained of "Mr. Poole, High Holborn, Colourman to Artists," and in Romney's day-book, which Messrs. Maggs kindly allowed me to see, there are entries from time to time of paints, oils, varnishes, etc., ordered from Poole. The entries in most cases were made by Romney's servant, Williams. Poole died or retired some time after 1800 and was succeeded by Thomas Brown the elder, who was the most prominent colourman of his time.

To Brown's warehouse it was that Wilkie went when he wanted to send some colours in 1809 to the country seat of that eminent amateur, Sir George Beaumont; and Etty, writing from Italy a few years later, expresses his regret that there is "no Brown's colour shop" in Venice, where he had tried in vain to obtain materials of which he was urgently in need.

It is unlikely that there is any painter now living who dealt with the firm who claimed to have supplied colours to the earlier Presidents, but thirty years ago traditions of the Browns still lingered among the veterans who had bought from them in their youth. One of the stories told of the Holborn colour shop, which was extensively patronized by Academy students, was connected with Landseer. He was a customer when the business was carried on by the proprietor and his son, known everywhere to artists as Old Brown and Young Brown. The father was genial, the son a gloomy man whose constant melancholy was ascribed by the Academy students to unrequited love. Only once, according to the old painter who told the story, was the shadow lifted from his brow, and that was when Landseer called one day to buy some brushes. Landseer was fond of carrying small animals

about with him and on this occasion he had a little monkey in his overcoat pocket. While he and the senior partner had their heads together over the brushes, the monkey escaped, sprang on to the counter, and snatching off Old Brown's wig climbed with it to the topmost shelf in the shop. Then, and then only, was his son seen to smile.

Adulteration of pigments and mediums was common among the inferior colourmen of the eighteenth century, and complaints of their practices are frequent in contemporary handbooks on painting. "Numbers of the materials," says Gower in 1795, "are either not genuine or are vilely sophisticated; and when ground and tied up in bladders are mixed with raw and impure oils." Williams, a Bath artist who published *An Essay on the Mechanic of Oil Colours* in 1787, impresses upon his readers the need of dealing with an honest colourman:—

"He may prevent," says Williams, "the painter's disappointment and disgrace attending the supplying him with bad materials, as once (I remember) some years ago happened to several eminent painters now living; 'twas in the infancy of the exhibition of the Society of Artists, when, by the use of a bad oil procured from a colour shop the pictures never dried during the month it was open, but parted from their pigments and ran down in tears."

CHAPTER TWENTY

John Hamilton Mortimer; Henry Walton and the Royal Academy; One vote for the A.R.A.; Henry Pelham; Ozias Humphry's method of miniature painting; Extravagant contemporary opinion of Mortimer; "Excels Michael Angelo"; A puff for Barry; Erroneous statements about Mortimer; His charm of manner and amazing facility; A comparison with Maclise; Pamphlet of 1779; "The Exhibition, or a Second Anticipation"; Walpole's conjectures as to its authorship; Robert Watson; Customs of portrait painters; Half-price in advance; Story of Kneller and a diamond ring; Likeness in portraiture; Letter from Romney; Somerset House rebuilt; New Galleries for the Academy; The exhibition of 1780; A prudish public; The casts from the antique; "The terror of every decent woman"; Personal appeal to Sir Joshua; William Peters, R.A.; His "unblushing countenance"; Questionable pictures; Casts from Italy; Letter from Jacob More; Gifts to the Academy in the eighteenth century; Lists of donors imperfect; The mystery of the Leonardo.

IN 1778 the doomed Incorporated Society of Artists lost one of its few remaining members of eminence by the defection of John Hamilton Mortimer. The contemporary fame of this painter has not stood the test of time, but in 1778 he was an important person in the world of art and had acted for several years as Vice-President of the Incorporated Society of Artists. From this body, according to a story of the period, he was induced to sever his connection by the promise of an Associateship, and promotion to the full honours of the Academy at the earliest possible date. Sir Frederick Eaton in *The Royal Academy and its Members* says that Mortimer was elected an Associate "in spite of the fact that he had never exhibited at the Academy," but this statement, borrowed from Sandby's *History of the Royal Academy of Arts*, is erroneous.

Mortimer before his election exhibited five pictures at the Academy of 1778, one of which, *A Family* (206), was the subject of unflattering comments in the newspapers. One critic, who describes Mortimer's work as "his family," as if it represented the relatives of the artist, says that it is a disgrace to him and ought not to have been accepted by the Academy; and another, unkindlier still, declares in the *Morning Post* that the countenances of the figures in *A Family* "do not seem capable of depicting any other sensation but the chagrin that generally accompanies the consciousness of deformity."

Nevertheless, the painter of *A Family* was elected an Associate in the following November, when for two vacant seats there were nineteen candidates:—Benjamin Vandergucht, William Burgess, David Allan, Henry Walton, Henry Pelham, Robert Davy, James Nixon, William Moss, Edward Oram, John Foldstone, John Donowell, John Hamilton Mortimer, John Taylor, Horace Hone, Alexander Cozens, John Downman, E. Whitton, Joseph Ceracchi and Sir George Chalmers. The first seat fell to Mortimer by an immense majority, and the second to James Nixon, the miniature and portrait painter, whose election gave serious offence to Henry Walton, an artist whose picture, *Plucking the Turkey*, is in the National Gallery. Walton's friends complained that the Academicians had urged him to put his name down as a candidate but afterwards failed to support him at the ballot, in which he got but one vote, while Vandergucht, whom they describe as a mere picture restorer, received four.

It is surprising to find in the list of candidates in 1778 the name of Henry Pelham, the half-brother of John Singleton Copley, a young man who had exhibited nothing at the Academy but a few miniatures and had not the slightest chance of receiving a vote. The too ambitious Pelham, who afterwards abandoned the practice of the arts and became agent to the Irish estates of Lord Lansdowne, was the original of the portrait *A Boy with a Flying Squirrel*, the first work exhibited in London by Copley. The two young men were on the most affectionate terms and when Copley left America to study in Italy he wrote many letters home about the pictures he saw from time to time; letters intended for the instruction of Pelham who was then painting miniatures in Boston.

Copley met Oziás Humphry in Italy and appears to have asked his advice about the method adopted by his half-brother. In a letter to his mother, written from Parma in 1775, Copley refers to Pelham's work and says:—"His process in miniature is, I believe, very right; only Mr. Humphry tells me that he uses no sugar candy in his colours, that he tints them at first exceeding faint, and so brings on their effect by degrees." The younger man in his turn, writes joyfully from Boston to report to Copley the delightful things that had been said of his work by a flattering stranger from England, who knew—or said he knew—the great London painters. "A gentleman," says Pelham, "a Captain in the 43rd Regiment, told me yesterday that Sir Joshua Reynolds

said to him 'I would give a thousand pounds sterling that I could paint white equal to Mr. Copley'; and that Mr. West told him that he was ashamed to have one of your pictures placed by his, as they entirely eclipsed his performances."

Mortimer at the time of his election to an Associateship was regarded by some as the most distinguished artist of British birth, and the attack on his work in the newspapers of 1778 was answered by a correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle* who contemptuously reproves the critics for venturing, with their "uncultivated understandings," to meddle with the work of a painter "who is the most learned anatomist, the most powerful and perfect master of the human form that has ever appeared, either among the living or the dead. His astonishing productions, either with the pen or pencil, disarm our envy at the same time that they excite our wonder; for how is it possible to envy the man for excelling *us*, who also excels Michael Angelo?"

This extravagant eulogy of an artist who was little more than a dexterous draughtsman and painter should be compared with Galt's opinion, already quoted, of the genius of Benjamin West. Oddly enough the assertion that Mortimer excelled Michael Angelo passed unchallenged, although had such a claim been made on behalf of Barry he would probably have been accused of the authorship of the letter in which it appeared. I have already mentioned the suspicion that Barry made use of the Press to puff his work, and this question was raised in the very year in which Mortimer was so absurdly applauded. A letter was addressed to the editor of the *General Advertiser* begging him to print a poem "in honour of a great man who, I hear, has given up the éclat of the day for the splendour which will in future time accompany his name and travel down with it to posterity. I reverence the firmness and virtue of a character which adds another ornament to human nature." The poem was printed and the "great man," who had now ceased to exhibit at the Academy, apostrophized in some fifty lines of verse of which it is sufficient to quote the following:—

"Homer revives in Milton's mighty line,
And great Apelles lives again in thine.
In Courts let insects spread the gaudy wing;
For Kings let Reynolds paint and Whitehead sing.
Thee, Barry, thee no vulgar muse surveys
For thee her harp to string, her voice to raise."

This bombast, in which the Irish painter is ranked with Apelles, and Reynolds coupled with a poet so mediocre as the Laureate, William Whitehead, was signed "A Female." Its appearance in the *General Advertiser* was followed two or three days later by a sarcastic couplet, published in the same journal, "on Barry's fulsome lines, written by HIMSELF to HIMSELF."

Mortimer died three months after he was elected an Associate and never attained the degree of Academician, although some of his biographers have declared that it was bestowed upon him. According to the *Dictionary of National Biography* he was appointed a Royal Academician but died before he received his diploma; and in Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers* it is said that "in the year 1779 without solicitation or expectation he was created a Royal Academician by the especial grant of His Majesty." It is certain that these statements are unfounded. If Mortimer had been made an Academician, whether by appointment or election, the fact would be recorded in the minutes of the Royal Academy. The only reference to him in the minutes of 1779 is the entry of a resolution:—"That the pictures which the late Mr. Mortimer intended for the exhibition be received, he having died within the year," and eight of his works were therefore shown at the Academy of 1779.

By nature strong and vigorous, the excesses of a riotous youth undermined Mortimer's constitution and he had not attained the age of forty when he died at a house in Norfolk Street, Strand. After his marriage, which took place about four years before his death, he lived a quiet and sober life, but in his youth no frolic was too mad for him. It is said that in one of his most extravagant moments he swallowed some fragments of a wineglass that he had ground to pieces with his teeth, and that he never quite recovered from the effects of this act of folly.

All accounts agree that Mortimer was a brilliant talker and a fascinating companion, and the same qualities distinguished the wife who redeemed him, and to whom he was devoted. "Never," said an old friend of the painter, "was a man more happy in such a connection or a woman more miserable when death deprived her of him." The charm of Mortimer's manner was so great that it affected even the gloomy and unsociable Barry, who, according to the same authority, was afraid to trust himself in his society. We are told that:—

"Several months before Barry began his great work at the

MORTIMER AND RAPHAEL'S CARTOONS

Adelphi (in the room of the Society of Arts) Mortimer called at his house, wishing to see his sketches for those pictures, but he could only gain admission as far as the passage. 'Go along,' said Barry, 'you are a clever scoundrel. I'll not let you see anything I am about—I don't want to see you these seven years. Go home, you have ideas enough of your own, you shan't have any of mine—go along I say, I won't trust myself with you,' and he pushed him out of the house for fear if he stayed any longer he should be overcome with his pleasantry."

The writer, who told this story soon after the death of Barry, asserted that he had good reason for distrusting Mortimer, whose picture *The Battle of Agincourt* was in composition and design copied almost literally from a drawing borrowed from a brother artist.

But in the opinion of an enthusiastic admirer of Mortimer who published a sketch of his character in 1779, in the *Morning Post*, he was gifted with an inexhaustible fancy and had no need to steal ideas or anything else, from however eminent a master. Mortimer, who in the preceding year had been described as superior to Michael Angelo, is now placed in some respects before Raphael.

"His heads would seem portraits expressly from the life, for the admirable nature and correctness that appears in them, but that they have also a nobleness of idea and greatness of style which no portrait ever possessed. Every historical figure by this artist affords a sufficient proof of this and—however superficial smatterers may affect to be shocked by the assertion—there is not in any one of the Cartoons of Raphael (the best of that great artist's productions) any heads which would not suffer in regard to the above particulars if compared with those in our artist's picture *Vortigern and Rowena* in the last exhibition of the Royal Academy, on which any person of taste and judgment need only look to be convinced. But his powers over every part of visible nature were equally surprising, as appears in the animals and landscapes of his painting as well as in the above mentioned performance; which was entirely painted, as indeed all his pieces were, from idea only, and every figure drawn with the same facility and certainty of correctness from mere fancy without the assistance of either model or drapery."

The following description by the above writer of Mortimer's facility of draughtsmanship explains Richard Cumberland's refer-

ence to him as "ready Mortimer who laughs at toil" in some well-known lines on the painters of his time.

"He possessed a willingness to oblige equal to his other talents, and therefore he was seldom suffered to sit long by his intimate friends without pen, ink and paper, which he would immediately enrich with the most inestimable designs. The most puzzling and seemingly impossible tasks gave him no more embarrassment than the commonest subjects, and what was still more amazing he never altered a line; the first stroke always remained untouched, nor ever needed correction. But it exceeded all to see him sketch out an intended history piece on canvas. The whole length of a limb seldom took more than one stroke and he could complete the most beautiful outline of a whole figure in less time than another artist could any of the parts; and all the time he was thus pouring out wonders he conversed and entertained his friends with the same easy cheerfulness and pleasantry as if he were wholly unemployed."

A small but interesting example of Mortimer's work belongs to the Royal Academy, to which it was presented in 1889 by the late Mr. T. Humphry Ward. It represents Mortimer himself seated at a table drawing from a cast, and Joseph Wilton, R.A., leaning over him and criticizing his work. A boy stands in the background holding an antique mask. The picture when presented was described as "Portraits of the Painter, of Joseph Wilton, R.A., and of a lad named Thury, who used to sweep out the rooms at Somerset House," and has always been regarded as a representation of a scene in the Royal Academy schools. This, however, is unlikely. Mortimer never worked in the schools, and although Wilton was for some years their Keeper he was not appointed to the post until long after Mortimer's death. Mortimer's picture no doubt represents one of the rooms at the house of the Duke of Richmond, who allowed his famous gallery of casts to be used as a school of art. Mortimer was a pupil at the school and Wilton one of the teachers. Another portrait of Mortimer hangs in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House, and is attributed to Richard Wilson, although the painting of the figure is unlike any known work by that artist.

Mortimer, so far as we can judge, seems to have had much in common with Maclise. Both shared the fatal habit of dispensing with models, and were gifted with a dangerous facility with the pencil and a prodigal imagination. Both were

tall, handsome and athletic men, adored, and regarded as possessed of genius beyond all question, by a large section of their fellow-artists, and in neither case has time justified their earlier reputation. It is an instructive comment on the value of contemporary opinion that West, Barry and Mortimer who in the eighteenth century were ranked by their admirers with the great Italian masters; and Maclise who in a later generation was the idol of the public, should all be unrepresented at Trafalgar Square.

Dante Rossetti, when lamenting in 1871 that so little notice had been taken of the then recent death of Maclise, claimed that at all events he stood in no danger of oblivion. That was the general idea when Rossetti wrote, fifty years ago, but where does Maclise stand to-day? He is little more than a name to the modern generation of painters, many of whom have never seen his pictures of Trafalgar and Waterloo in the House of Lords. And although there are still competent critics who regard those pictures with respect it is unlikely that one could be found to support the opinion expressed by Rossetti when he said:—"These two splendid monuments of his genius, thus truly directed, he has left; and we may stand before them with the confidence that only in the field of poetry, and not of painting, can the world match them as chronicles of heroic beauty."

Through some correspondence between Walpole and Dr. Lort, the name of Barry has been connected with a pamphlet that was published a few days before the opening of the Academy exhibition of 1779, on the lines of the famous political skit, *Anticipation*, in which in the preceding year Richard Tickell had given what professed to be a forecast of the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament in 1778.

The pamphlet of 1779 is entitled *The Exhibition, or a second Anticipation; being remarks on the principal works to be exhibited next month at the Royal Academy*, and described as the production of Roger Shanhagan, Gent., who sketches wholly imaginary pictures by Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilson and others, and accompanies his notes with running commentaries on the general characteristics of the work of the artists. He notices particularly Gainsborough's uncommon execution and methods of using colour, but while praising the painter warns him that there is no future for his work. "His pictures are the beauties of a day, and as such they must fall as new graces of fashion and new modes

of beauty arise. This the Painter has foreseen, and thence has formed his unlaborious, ideal style. Pity it is that so much ingenuity should ever lose its value, but so passes the glory of the world!" The architecture of Sir William Chambers, Adam, and others, is also criticized.

Walpole had an idea that the pamphlet was written by Barry. He says so in a letter to Dr. Lort, to which his correspondent replied as follows on June 11th, 1779:—"I had not seen the *Second Anticipation* when you wrote. I have since seen it and like such parts as I understand, but there is a great deal I do not, wherefore I conclude it is the work of an artist and daresay you ascribe it rightly to Barry." Walpole was mistaken in his conjecture, for the pamphlet was the joint composition of three young men, Robert Watson and Robert Smirke, painters, and William Porden, architect. Mr. Arthur T. Bolton, in his life of Robert Adam, ascribes the *Second Anticipation* to Smirke and Porden only, on the authority of a passage in an unpublished lecture by Sir John Soane; but Watson had a share in the authorship, and probably the principal share. His biographer, John Sykes, credits him with the whole of it. Sykes claims too much, but Joseph Farington, R.A., when referring to this work in his *Diary*, Vol. I, page 165, mentions the authors as Watson, Smirke and Porden in the order given. Farington calls it "The Anticipation of Shanaghan," but says nothing of its purport and leaves readers to decipher the meaning of the title as best they can. Anderdon mentions a connection between Smirke and Watson.

Robert Watson was a Northumbrian, who, after being apprenticed to a Newcastle coach painter, came to London to study art, and entered the schools of the Royal Academy in 1775, on the same day as Hoppner and Gainsborough Dupont. In 1778 he exhibited six works at the Royal Academy, portraits and figure compositions. Sykes says that the *Second Anticipation* procured him "powerful patronage," and that an essay by him on the nature and existence of the material world was highly praised by the Monthly Reviewers. Watson was also the author of a tragedy which was accepted, though never performed, by the management of a London theatre. He abandoned painting to take up an appointment as an engineer in India, where he died of fever in his twenty-eighth year.

A letter written by Ozias Humphry in 1779 indicates that most artists at this time adhered closely to the practice, not yet

extinct, of requiring half the price in advance for portraits painted by them. Humphry, who in this year was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, had received a commission from Lady Mulgrave, but as she did not volunteer the payment of the half-price he sent her a bill for the amount before proceeding with the portrait. In a covering letter he excuses himself for this action by pleading that the custom had been followed for many years by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Francis Cotes, and William Peters. He does not mention Gainsborough who perhaps did not always adopt the plan, and lost money in consequence. Gainsborough, of whom his friend Thicknesse said that he had less worldly knowledge than any man he had met, was always shy and unbusinesslike; and although he sold pictures to the Prince of Wales and painted portraits for him, it was said, not long after his death, that he "never could be prevailed upon to deliver in an account of his claims."

Reynolds, who was a man of the world as well as a great painter, insisted on money in advance, and it has been asserted that he was the first to institute the practice. In the course of a discussion on this point in the *Athenæum*, soon after the death of Sir Thomas Lawrence, a correspondent of the journal, who seems to have been acquainted with Sir Joshua, said:—"It was established by him for the following reason. When he acquired his reputation everybody wanted their portraits by him, but when they were nearly completed the parties never again appeared, having attained their ambition to be painted by Sir Joshua. He, therefore, in self-defence, required half-price to be paid at the first sitting and thereby assured the attendance of no others but such as really intended to take the pictures when done."

However, Sir Joshua—who with all his precautions had many portraits left upon his hands—was by no means the initiator in England of the practice of payments in advance, which can be traced back as far as William Dobson. It was the custom of Hogarth as we know from a list in his writing, dated 1731, "of all the pictures that remain unfinished—half payment received." In this Hogarth was following in the footsteps of Kneller, who after 1682 insisted on money in advance from his sitters, and kept a diary in which he recorded all the sums paid to him. A story told by Vertue suggests that the practice was not common in England until the German painter settled here:—

"As Kneller grew in reputation, business and equipage,

noblemen and ladies and gentlemen of all sorts attended him. He accustomed them to pay half the money for their pictures at first, his price being fifteen guineas for a head, twenty pounds for a head and one hand, thirty pounds for a half length figure, sixty pounds for a whole length and so proportionately. A nobleman came to him once to sit for his picture and desired an entire whole length. When he had sat the first time Kneller acquainted the nobleman that his custom was to take at first so much. The nobleman answered, after a little pause: 'I have not heard of this custom, Sir Godfrey, but,' taking a ring from his finger, 'there is a diamond ring of £600 value. Let me have four hundred guineas till I redeem it and then you may pay yourself.'"

This proposal was distasteful to Kneller who was too shrewd to advance money upon a security of the value of which he was ignorant. He felt also that the suggestion touched his dignity. "I am a painter, your Honour," he said, "please don't take me for a pawnbroker—or for a fool—to part with four hundred guineas for a thing I don't understand." There is at Welbeck one of his acknowledgments of money in advance:—

"March 18, 1714. Receved for my Lady Henrieta Harley's picture halfe in hand, therty Ginis by me

G. KNELLER."

At a later period, towards the end of the eighteenth century, a personal intimation such as that given by Kneller was unnecessary, as it became the rule to display prominently in the studio a printed or written notice that half the price of the portrait must be paid at the first or second sitting. This was all to the advantage of the painter, to whom it ensured some reward for his work however unsatisfactory the result might prove in point of likeness, which was the principal thing that concerned the average client. And the interesting letters of defence written by Gainsborough to Lord Dartmouth show that in this respect even he failed to please occasionally, although as Ozias Humphry says, "exact resemblance in his portraits was his constant aim." Approval of Sir Joshua's portraits was by no means the rule; nor were Romney's patrons always satisfied. In the year of which I am now writing, 1779, the complaints of one of Romney's sitters constrained him to offer to repaint entirely a recently completed half length of that well-known patron of the arts the

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second Earl of Hardwicke. Romney says, writing to the Earl in September, 1779:—

“Your Lordship’s picture not meeting with approbation as I expected, has given me great uneasiness, as I felt myself most flattered in having a picture of mine in your Lordship’s collection. Be assured I shall be very happy and very desirous to make any alteration your Lordship may think proper; if it be your Lordship’s wish that the whole composition should be altered I will do it with the greatest cheerfulness and beg that your Lordship will permit it to be sent to town when convenient; but beg leave to observe that there is a gradation of light from the head downwards, and of course the hands must be in a much lower scale, or they would be spots in the picture and not in unity with the draperies.”

As writers on eighteenth-century artists are aware, the painter of the portrait complained of by Lord Hardwicke had many works left upon his hands, finished or unfinished. But it is not so well known that Cosway, easily the most popular miniaturist of his time, was as unfortunate in this respect as Romney. At a sale held after Cosway’s death, by order of his widow, the works disposed of included “numerous highly finished miniature portraits of persons of rank and fashion, remarkable for elegance of design and beauty of execution.”

Although Romney was now, in 1779, a fashionable portrait painter nothing would induce him to show his work in public, not even in the imposing new building which Sir William Chambers had just built upon the site of the original Somerset House, in which the schools of the Royal Academy had hitherto been conducted. The new building was available for the first time in 1780, and Walpole writes at the beginning of his catalogue for that year:—“The first exhibition at Somerset House, with excellent pictures by Gainsborough, Zoffani, Wright and others. N.B. Mr. Romney, now in great vogue, sent none of his pictures to either of the exhibitions.”

Even with Romney standing aloof and Reynolds less fully represented than usual, the first exhibition drew unexampled crowds to the new Somerset House, and to each of the visitors on the opening day an “elegant handbill” was given as a memento of the occasion. The receipts, £3,069, were more than double those of any exhibition held in the old rooms in Pall Mall. Gainsborough, who sent sixteen pictures, was a great attraction,

but people went to see the new galleries quite as much as the pictures and sculpture.

Hitherto the Academy had been compelled to hold its exhibitions in rooms that had not been designed for the display of works of art and were merely hired for the season. But it was now housed with state and dignity in the newest and finest public building in London and the visitors who packed the rooms in the spring of 1780 found many things to interest or shock them, apart from the exhibition works. The interesting objects included the recently completed portraits of the King and Queen by Reynolds, which had been placed in the Council Room, and those that shocked the more fastidious were the casts from famous statues which adorned the Antique Room and the staircases. To-day it seems incredible that the exhibition of these casts could have caused a storm of disapproval and brought forth the violent letters of protest that appeared in the newspapers of 1780. One writer addressed his appeal to Sir Joshua personally and begged him, "though neither father nor husband yourself," to remove the casts which were "the terror of every decent woman who enters the Antique Room." In another epistle, long and hectoring, and signed "No Conjuror," the writer after indignantly mentioning "the Apollos, Gladiators, Jupiters, etc.," that were exposed, asks the President and Council of the Royal Academy:—

"How comes it that these statues are without reserve laid open to the indiscriminate view of the female part of your visitors? Has decency totally left the direction of the institution, or has the unblushing countenance of a P . . . laughed you out of the sense of delicacy, that these figures which heretofore deterred ladies from ever entering the apartments of the old Academy are now drawn out in the full face of day and obtruded on their view without the least reserve? What sort of compliment is offered either to the ladies or to their Majesties that to have the pleasure of contemplating those masterly representations of the Royal Pair a woman must forfeit her claim to delicacy? It was surely violence enough offered to that sentiment in the female mind to have passed with tolerable composure the figure of the Apollo Belvedere in the Vestibule without subjecting it to so formidable an ordeal as that in the Antique Room."

By "the Old Academy" the writer means not the room in Pall Mall in which the annual exhibitions had been held in previous



The Strand Front of the New Somerset House, 1780

From a Drawing by Thomas Malton

years but the apartments in Old Somerset House which had accommodated the Royal Academy schools. These were now removed to the new Somerset House, where the classes were held in the galleries during the months when the exhibition was closed, and hence the presence of that most blameless of figures, the Apollo Belvedere, and of the other casts, all of which were models from which drawings were made by the less advanced students.

The Academician of the unblushing countenance was William Peters, for whom this question was raised at a most inopportune moment, as he was then preparing for his ordination, which took place in the year following the publication of the letter signed "No Conjuror." The works exhibited at the Academy by Peters would perhaps pass unnoticed in our own times so far as their nudity or semi-nudity was concerned. But the eighteenth-century public, coarse as it was in expression, had its own ideas about the propriety of pictures, and scandals had been caused by some of the works exhibited by the future Chaplain of the Royal Academy. The most notorious of these, said to be a portrait, was *A Woman in Bed* shown at the Academy of 1777 and described by an admirer of the artist as "painted by Mr. Peters with all the richness and warmth of colouring of the Florentine and Venetian Schools." Of this picture the critic of the *Morning Chronicle* complained that "in its present situation it serves to prevent the pictures round it from being so much seen and admired as their merit demand, for every man who has either his wife or his daughter with him must for decency's sake hurry them away from that corner of the room." It may be remarked here that a writer in the *St. James's Chronicle* spoke with equal severity of a picture by the virtuous Northcote when it was exhibited in 1796. He said of *The Wanton in her Bedchamber* (239)—"We are astonished that a subject so gross and so indelicately treated should have found a place in the Academy."

Peters' picture, *A Woman in Bed*, must, I think, be the one mentioned in an entry in the Council minutes of the Royal Academy, on April 13th, 1777, a fortnight before the opening of the exhibition. The entry is the record of a resolution passed by the Council:—"That the lines from Dryden relating to Mr. Peters' picture be not inserted in the catalogue." The lines are not given in the minutes, but students of seventeenth-century literature will have no difficulty in understanding that they may have been too apt for quotation in connection with the picture.

In questions concerning the representation of the nude, America at this period was even more fastidious than England. In 1782 the painter Robert Edge Pine crossed the Atlantic to execute some American commissions and with the hope of improving his position which was then far from satisfactory. He took with him, in addition to his own pictures, several examples of the art of different periods, and among them a cast of the Venus de Medici. This cast Pine was obliged to keep shut up in a case which was only opened to oblige those who were particularly desirous of seeing the Venus. "The manners of our country would not then tolerate the public exhibition of such a figure," says the American, Dunlap, who told the story on the authority of a correspondent who remembered Pine's arrival.

A cast of the Venus de Medici was among those to the public display of which exception was taken at Somerset House in 1780. The cast, which is said to have been a particularly good one, was given to the Academy by the Duke of Gloucester, the stepfather of the Ladies Waldegrave, and had been presented to the Duke by a Venetian nobleman of his acquaintance. In 1773 casts from Ghiberti's bronze doors of the Baptistery at Florence were given, but the name of the donor is not mentioned in the minutes or in the following paragraph, which appeared in the *Public Advertiser*:—

"A gentleman who has just arrived from Italy has made the Royal Academy a present of a mould of the gates of a church in Florence. These gates have long been objects of curiosity among the virtuosi of Europe, insomuch so that the great Michael Angelo looking at them one day very attentively exclaimed 'these gates are fit for nothing but the gates of Paradise.'"

Such gifts as these were more important and valuable than similar ones would be to-day, for in the eighteenth century it was not always easy to obtain good casts from abroad, especially from Italy. This is shown by the following extract from a letter written by Jacob More to an artist in England in 1789:—

"I am sorry to find that the Prince Borghese will not grant the permission to take a mould from the Antinous; the Gladiator having been damaged formerly in making a mould made him take the resolution not to grant that favour for the future. I mentioned that the process that the man took was very different from what they used formerly—as a proof of that

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he has taken a cast from the Apollo, which is a very delicate statue and has not suffered in the least—but the Prince having refused that favour at the request of Cardinals and Princes for Crowned Heads, he could not now grant it without giving offence.”

Those who made gifts to the Royal Academy at or near its foundation included Horace Walpole, Richard Wilson, R.A., Francis Hayman, R.A., Agostini Carlini, R.A., John Gwynn, R.A., Thomas Major the engraver, Robert Adam, John Boydell, Joseph Baretti, and Jonathan Richardson the younger. Unfortunately the minutes do not state the nature of any of the gifts except that of Richardson, which was a set of his father's books on art. Dr. Johnson's name does not figure in the list of donors, although he was a Professor of the Royal Academy, but his medical friend and house-mate, Robert Levett, gave a book described as *Institute of the Danish Academy*. It is a copy, in Danish and French, of the laws of the Royal Danish Academy of painting, which was founded in 1754. The book, which is still in the Library at Burlington House, was presented personally by Johnson on behalf of Levett.

The frequent omission from the minutes of descriptions of the gifts acquired makes it impossible to say how or when the Academy came into possession of some valuable articles now at Burlington House. Nothing, for instance, has been said of the acquisition of the cartoon, *The Holy Family and St. Anne*, by Leonardo da Vinci, now in the Diploma Gallery; or of the fine panel of tapestry that lay neglected in the schools for years, but has since been cleaned, and at present hangs, framed and under glass, on one of the staircases. In the case of the Da Vinci the entire absence of information is extraordinary, for the cartoon is one of the Academy's choicest treasures.

It is first mentioned in the minutes on March 23rd, 1791:—
“The Cartoon by Leonardo da Vinci in the Royal Academy, being in a perishable state, having been neglected many years. Resolved. That it have all the possible repairs and be secured in a frame and glasses, which the Secretary is requested to take charge of.”

In July the cartoon was hung in the Council Room, framed and glazed; and in October the members of the Council formally expressed their satisfaction with its restoration and voted twelve guineas to the Secretary, John Inigo Richards, R.A., by whom

the repairs had been accomplished. But Leonardo's cartoon as we see it to-day is not exactly as it was after its restoration by Richards. In 1826 it was found necessary to clean and repair it again and this was done by Ramsay Richard Reinagle, R.A. The eighteenth-century Academicians had little idea of its value, for when in February, 1798, Anker Smith asked leave to borrow the cartoon with a view to making an engraving from it the Council granted his request "unanimously." Smith took it away to his house, where it remained until the following December. He then returned it with a gift to the Academy of three proofs of his engraving, which is by no means good.

The idea of executing the engraving was probably suggested to Anker Smith by Barry, who in 1798 said in his *Letter to the Dilettanti Society*:—"I could much wish that some able man was to make a print of this cartoon of St. Anne, etc., even in its unfinished and wretched state." Barry, who is, I think, the only writer who mentions the cartoon at the Academy in the eighteenth century, speaks of other drawings by Leonardo that were brought from abroad by Robert Udny, to whom we may owe the importation of *The Holy Family and St. Anne*. That it reached England through a member of the Udny family is the opinion of Mr. Alfred Marks and Sir Herbert Cook, who have made researches into the history of the cartoon up to about 1760.

After this all trace of it is lost until 1791, and there is no evidence to show how long it had then been at the Academy, whether it came through one of the donors mentioned in the minutes, or was a gift of which they contain no acknowledgment, like that of Pigalle, the French sculptor. Pigalle was one of the earliest benefactors of the Royal Academy, to which, soon after its foundation, he presented a cast from one of his statues for use in the schools. He is not mentioned in the minutes, nor are the names given of several other donors of the period.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Eidophusikon; Theatre thieves; A Duchess robbed of her shoes; Copley's "Death of the Earl of Chatham"; New light on the picture's history; Exhibited at Spring Gardens; Twenty thousand visitors; Reverential crowds; A severe criticism of the picture; "The work of the author's imagination"; Christie the auctioneer and George the Third; Bate Dudley's notes on Gainsborough; Seascapes by Gainsborough; Bath commissions; Portraits of the Ladies Waldegrave; Sir Joshua's colours more permanent; Painting his "Master Bunbury."

"LOUTHERBOURG," writes Walpole in 1781, "being employed on his Eidophusikon, had no pictures for the Exhibition." The "Eidophusikon," the preparations for which had prevented De Louthembourg from painting anything for the Academy of 1781, was the invention of this ingenious Frenchman; the best stage designer and machinist of his day, who had settled in London ten years earlier. It was shown by him in a large room at his house in Lisle Street, Leicester Square.

An exhibition that charmed Reynolds and so fascinated Gainsborough that he witnessed it over and over again, it was composed chiefly of moving land and seascapes displayed on a little stage about eight feet in width by six in height. Here could be seen representations of dawn over London, of storms at sea, sunsets, and English pastoral scenes; and occasionally of such subjects as winter in the Alps with woodcutters defending themselves from the attacks of wolves; moonrise in the Mediterranean; or the English fleet advancing to the relief of Gibraltar, which at this time was besieged by the French and Spaniards.

The Eidophusikon if shown to-day would probably be regarded as a toy, but De Louthembourg's effects of moving clouds and raging seas were new to his public, and the little theatre in Lisle Street became at once the fashion and was crowded night after night. Some of the popularity of the Eidophusikon was no doubt due to its surroundings, which set a new standard of comfort and luxury for the eighteenth century. Garrick had done much to improve the London theatres, but they were still relatively noisy and rowdy, and gathering-places always for the rough London mob, uncontrolled as it was then by any proper force of police. Swarms of pickpockets and other thieves surrounded the precincts of the playhouses and daring robberies from the person were of almost nightly occurrence.

Stealing shoe buckles was at this time, and for years afterwards,

a common form of larceny, and in the crush outside the theatre door women sometimes lost both shoes and buckles. The intended victim was surrounded and hustled by three or four members of a gang and lifted for a moment off her feet, and in that moment a confederate snatched off her shoes. The Duchess of Bedford was once robbed in this fashion while she was being escorted from her chair to the door of her box at Covent Garden Theatre on the night of a brilliant "command" performance when the King and Queen and several of the Princesses were present. It is said that she afterwards walked across the stage in her stockings. In the galleries of theatres, fights and other disturbances were frequent, and the throwing of missiles made dangerous even the more expensive parts of the house. On one occasion the Duchess of Cumberland's sister, Lady Elizabeth Luttrell, was struck in the eye, and at first it was feared, blinded, by an apple thrown at her from the gallery as she sat in the stage box at Drury Lane.

There was nothing of this kind at the French artist's little theatre, which was probably the only entertainment that unprotected women could then visit in safety. It contained no gallery or other provision for cheap seats, and a charge of five shillings for admission was common to all parts of the house. It was opened on February 26th, 1781, and a writer who was present gives us an interesting description of the first representation of the *Eidophusikon*.

"Upon the ground floor," he says, "is a room furnished in the genteel style, ornamented with a variety of paintings by Mr. De Louthembourg; among which is an exceeding fine landscape with cattle, and a battle piece between the Turks and Russians. These are both very large and capital performances and there are many of a smaller size no less excellent. This apartment is destined for the company, if they choose it, to wait till the performance is ready to begin, or to retire to after it is over while the carriages draw up to the door. At half-past seven precisely, a flight of stairs from the hall conducts the company into a theatre large enough to contain a hundred and thirty persons with ease. This room is the most beautiful that can be conceived; the panels painted in the richest style with festoons of flowers, musical instruments, etc. heightened in gold; where taste seems to have banished tawdriness and elegance takes complete possession. The seats for the spec-

tators are crimson stuff, and at the upper end is a seat of state between two pillars of the Ionic order, fit for a princely visitor."

He then describes the appearance "on the elegant little stage" of the various scenes, commencing with the dawn over London viewed from Greenwich Hill. At first the morning mists envelop the picture, but these disperse as the sun rises until he can see vessels sailing up and down the river and the cattle grazing in Greenwich Park. Immediately after this scene De Louthembourg introduced the first part of the musical performance that supplemented the exhibition of the moving pictures. This was "a beautiful poetical description of the morning, which had a very happy effect in embellishing the painting and was composed with every grace of harmony by Mr. Arne, and sung with the truest taste by Mrs. Arne; who sang two other songs (one composed by Mr. Bach) in all of which she displayed the most pleasing powers of voice with the greatest judgment of music and gave universal satisfaction to a very polite and brilliant audience." The composer of the morning song was Michael Arne, son of the well-known Dr. Arne; and his fellow-composer was John Christian Bach, the youngest son of the famous John Sebastian Bach and an intimate friend of Gainsborough.

De Louthembourg was not the only eminent artist unrepresented at the Academy of 1781. A more important absentee was Copley, who had just completed *The Death of the Earl of Chatham*, a picture that for more than eighty years was one of the attractions of the National Gallery, from which it ought never to have been removed. A copy would have served equally well for the House of Lords, where the original now hangs.

I do not know exactly when Copley commenced his picture, but a passage in one of the *Letters of Lady Harriot Eliot* shows that he was collecting material for it a year after Chatham's death.

Lady Harriot says in a letter of the 27th of May, 1779:—"We dined with Lord Temple yesterday, quite a family party. He has been sitting to the man who is painting the great and melancholy scene at the House of Lords, and I am told that his likeness is most striking." At this time Copley was perhaps unaware that Benjamin West was dealing with the same subject, with the King's approval. West's plan was far advanced before he heard of Copley's intention, but when he did hear of it he at once abandoned his picture. It may be that he feared to face

the inevitable comparison with Copley, but according to his son:—"On the disclosure of their similar but separate plans Mr. West generously relinquished the object of his pursuit and left the field open to his adversary."

In the autumn of 1779, a few months after Lady Harriot mentioned his picture, Copley was one of three artists invited by the Corporation of London to submit designs for a proposed memorial to Lord Chatham. The others, John Bacon, R.A., and Nicholas Read, both sculptors, sent models; and Copley a sketch in colour of the picture upon which he was then engaged:—"representing Lord Chatham at the unfortunate moment when he was apprised of his approaching dissolution in the House of Lords, attended by his sons and the Minority Lords. The Duke of Richmond is a principal figure in the group, which comprises fifty-six different figures, all executed in a masterly manner." Wilkes and Boydell were both present at the meeting of the Common Council at which the three designs were shown. Their respective merits were discussed at length, "some of the members being for erecting a statue, others for a picture." But most were in favour of the design by Bacon, who was thereupon commissioned to execute the marble monument that now stands in the Guildhall.

The Death of the Earl of Chatham was finished in the spring of 1781, and as rumour spoke highly of this picture of the last visit to Parliament of the greatest British statesman of his day, its appearance at the Royal Academy was anticipated with interest and curiosity. Of this its painter was well aware, but he was anxious to secure for himself the profits of exhibiting his work. The Academicians were equally desirous that it should figure among the attractions of their gallery.

Copley made up his mind to show *The Death of the Earl of Chatham* privately and engaged for the purpose the gallery in Pall Mall, then in the occupation of Christie the auctioneer, in which the exhibitions of the Royal Academy had been held previous to 1780. Here, however, he met with strong opposition from Sir William Chambers, who, as the spokesman of the Royal Academy, protested against the private exhibition of the picture, which he declared ought to be shown at Somerset House. Chambers expressed his views in a letter of marked incivility in which he spoke of Copley's forthcoming exhibition as "a raree-show"; and he brought such pressure to bear on Christie that the auctioneer



The Death of the Earl of Chatham

By J. S. Copley, R.A.

A. King Esq. H. Copley's Plate of the
DEATH OF THE EARL OF CHATHAM.



- 1 Lord Cardiff
- 2 Late Earl of Ferrers, then Hon. Mr. Shirley
- 3 Late Lord Robert Bertie
- 4 Earl Faucenberg
- 5 Late Duke of Montague
- 6 Lord Viscount Mount Edgcombe
- 7 Lord Viscount Villetort, then Hon. Mr. Edgcombe
- 8 Late Earl Waldegrave
- 9 Lord Loughborough, then Solicitor-General
- 10 Lord Chancellor Thurlow, then Attorney-General
- 11 Late Lord George Germain
- 12 Earl of Guildford, then Lord North
- 13 Earl of Westmorland
- 14 Lord Onslow
- 15 Lord Westcote
- 16 Earl of Eglington
- 17 Dr. Hinchcliffe, Bishop of Peterborough
- 18 Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph

- 19 Dr. Markham, Archbishop of York
- 20 Lord Chief Baron-Skinner
- 21 Earl of Mansfield
- 22 Earl Bathurst, then Lord Chancellor
- 23 Marquis of Stafford, then Earl Gower
- 24 Earl of Sandwich
- 25 Lord Amhurst
- 26 Earl of Dartmouth
- 27 Late Lord Viscount Dudley and Ward
- 28 Lord Scarsdale
- 29 Earl of Jersey
- 30 Earl of Harcourt
- 31 Earl Cholmondeley
- 32 Lord Camden
- 33 Richard Brocklerley, M.D.
- 34 Duke of Gordon
- 35 Late Duke of Manchester
- 36 Late Lord Viscount Courtenay
- 37 Earl of Coventry
- 38 Earl of Effingham

- 39 Right Hon. William Pitt
- 40 Earl of Stanhope, then Lord Viscount Mahon
- 41 Late Hon. Mr. James Pitt
- 42 Present Earl of Chatham
- 43 Duke of Devonshire
- 44 Duke of Portland
- 45 His late Royal Highness, the Duke of Cumberland
- 46 The late Earl of Chatham
- 47 Marquis of Lansdowne, then Earl of Shelbourne
- 48 Late Earl Temple
- 49 Earl of Radnor
- 50 Earl of Leicester, then Lord de Ferrers
- 51 Duke of Richmond
- 52 Late Marquis of Rockingham
- 53 Late Earl Spencer
- 54 Earl Fitzwilliam
- 55 Earl of Bessborough

Key to Copley's "Death of the Earl of Chatham"

THE DEATH OF THE EARL OF CHATHAM

was obliged to refuse the American painter the use of his gallery.

Allan Cunningham, who mentions this incident in his life of Copley, says that the artist was incensed at the language of Chambers "and had some intention when he moved his picture of stating publicly the cause of this vexatious change," but having vented his wrath on paper in the morning he threw what he had written into the fire before he went to bed. But this is exactly what Copley did not do, for after securing the great room in Spring Gardens in the place of Christie's gallery he made public in the following statement the fact that Chambers had interfered with his plans:—

"The causes that have obliged Mr. Copley to change the place of the exhibition of his picture are the result of Sir William Chambers' apprehensions that it would be prejudicial to the exhibition of the Royal Academy, and Mr. Christie's having been in consequence thereof prohibited from letting his room for that purpose. How far these apprehensions are founded and how far so powerful an interference was necessary for the security of the interests of the Royal Academy from being injured by the exhibition of a single picture is left to the public to decide. Mr. Copley's most sanguine hopes of an approbation of his labours could never suggest so presuming an idea in his own favour, and Sir William Chambers alone must account to that distinguished body of artists for the propriety of the insinuation."

On the first of May, 1781, two or three days after the opening of the Academy, *The Death of the Earl of Chatham* was shown for the first time at Spring Gardens, and the success of its exhibition justified the apprehensions of Sir William Chambers. The popularity of Copley's picture was extraordinary, and according to contemporary statements more than twenty thousand visitors paid for admission to the gallery while it was on view. A writer in the *Morning Post* declared two or three years later that Copley cleared in all about five thousand pounds by exhibiting *The Death of the Earl of Chatham*, and there can be no doubt that its success affected the revenue of the Academy, where the receipts for the season, which had been £3,069 in 1780, fell to £2,141 in 1781.

The reverential behaviour of the crowds that thronged the exhibition room at Spring Gardens was a striking tribute to the

memory of the great Englishman. A correspondent of the *St. James's Chronicle* in describing the picture says that its effect upon the visitors is astonishing. "The room—whatever number of people it contains—is silent, or the company whispers as if at the bed of a sick person."

Some singular comments upon Copley's work are made by the same writer. He declares that the artist has drawn all the leaders of the Minority, grouped round the fainting Chatham, to the utmost advantage. But of the great Officers of State and supporters of the administration who surround the Chancellor, Lord Mansfield, he says:—

"Either Nature or the painter has given them the countenances of sharpers. Lord Mansfield has been distinguished from the rest by being drawn sitting, while the sympathetic alarm has brought up all the other members of the House. This has a fine effect on those who know that Lord Mansfield must have felt some secret satisfaction at the probable exit of a man who had been his scourge and his terror. It was not, however, the painter's intention to express precisely this idea. Lord Mansfield, it is said, was thus distinguished because he was the only nobleman applied to who would not sit for his picture. His refusal was attended with appearance of unconcern for the memory of Lord Chatham; and the painter has very properly expressed that unconcern by fixing him in his chair while the whole house is on tiptoe to observe an interesting event."

The picture was almost universally acclaimed, and as it was known that many of the Peers had given sittings to Copley it was assumed by the public that his work was a veritable representation of the tragic scene in the House of Lords. The same assumption has been made by critics of later generations, and Cunningham says of it that "its chief excellence is the accurate delineation of that impressive event, and the vast number of noble heads, all portraits"; but these qualities were challenged in a long and interesting criticism of the picture published in the *Gazetteer* on May 7th, 1781. The anonymous author of this description disclaims artistic knowledge and deals with the picture only from the point of view of historical fidelity. He says that he was present on the occasion of the last appearance of Lord Chatham; and his intimacy with the geography of the House of Lords of the period and with the personalities of its

members suggests that he was probably one of its officials, if not a Peer himself. He admits the resemblance of some of the portraits but expresses the opinion, "as one who has often trod or stood on every foot or inch of ground in a long debate in a full House," that Mr. Copley had never seen the inside of the House of Lords:—

"I am no artist, and if I should express myself untechnically but tell the truth, lovers of truth will excuse me. Whether the fault arose from the painter's not being present at the scene he attempts to represent, or from his total ignorance of the rules, as well as truth of perspective, I will not undertake to say; but after examining his picture in every possible point of view I do undertake to say that the vision, perspective, or whatever else you please to call it, is unfounded.

"The scene is represented to the spectator as if *below* the bar, and I do contend that there is no one spot below the bar, from the side door next the Committee Rooms or Bishops' Bench round to the seat of Black Rod (and I have often trod or stood on every single foot or inch of this ground, in a long debate in a full House) which could convey to me the place or places of any group, party, or single individual agreeable to truth or nature. If there be anything which seems to be an exception it is the persons represented standing on the steps of the Throne, but when that part of the scene is considered in respect of its relatives, the Woolsack, table, and Bishops' and Dukes' Benches, the jumble and absurdity of the grouping—I would call it the *groping*, are equally manifest.

"The cross-benches, and of course the great body of the House are sent out of it. I mean those benches occupied by the Viscounts and Barons, with their backs to the Bar and their faces to the Throne. If truth and uniformity were sought their places would not have been omitted, for though perhaps the canvas was too small more might have been added to it.

"The Lords are drawn in their robes. It is enough to observe that their Lordships were *not* robed; nay, more, that Mr. Copley ought to have known that their Lordships are *never* robed when in debate.

"Lords Gower, Dudley, Sandwich and Dartmouth are brought down almost to the very Bar, and a space is left between them and the Earl of Chatham without seats; another reason which induces me to think that Mr. Copley was never

within side the House of Lords, either when it was sitting or when it was empty. In the House of Commons there is a space between the benches; in the House of Lords the distance between the Bishops' and Earls' benches is all occupied by cross-seats on which the Viscounts and Barons when in their proper places, always sit, but which are always occupied in a full House. I remember a few years since there was a common sixpenny, or for aught I know, twopenny, political print of the inside of St. Stephen's Chapel, given in a periodical publication. I wish sincerely that Mr. Copley had copied that model, and if his *Death of Lord Chatham* is worth at present eight thousand pounds I do venture to say it would in that event have been worth twenty. In that respectable performance truth is adhered to, in Mr. Copley's it is not. The fireplace is totally omitted. The Bishop of London is represented on the Woolsack, with the Chief Baron, and the whole of the double bench of Bishops are pushed by a kind of poetical license through the wainscoat, the poor Archbishop of Canterbury among the rest. That is not all, another space is created between Lords Gower, Dudley, etc., and the Bishops of Peterborough and St. Asaph—I mean a space without seats, and the painter by his happy discoveries respecting the geography of the House has placed at a convenient distance the two Bishops in a direct line behind the said noble Lords.

"The group on the right, about Lord Chatham, is indeed a very *poetical* one. Lord Camden is represented standing on the *floor* at some distance with his face to the deceased [*sic*] the Duke of Cumberland supporting the deceased on his *left* hand, and the two Lords who first prevented the noble Earl from falling totally omitted, namely the Earls of Stamford and Thanet.

"But when a man lies on canvas I like to see him do it with a good grace. Lord Effingham is represented flying or descending from the clouds, a kind of elevated seat is prepared for the Duke of Devonshire, and Lords Radnor and Ferrers are exalted upon stilts.

"Many of the likenesses are capital, some of them good, others tolerable, and nearly one half of them are execrable.

"In the first class of all stands, or rather sits, Lord Mansfield, perhaps one of the finest portraits on the scale in which he is drawn in the known world; truth, nature, precision and

GOOD LIKENESSES AND BAD

animation carry the powers of deception further in this figure than in any I ever yet beheld. Lords Camden and Amherst come in for the next place and are inferior only to the former. After these come the Bishops of St. Asaph and Peterborough, Lords Gower and Dudley; near the Throne, Lords Loughborough and Thurlow, at the time Attorney and Solicitor General; Earl Ferrers and the Hon. Mr. Shirley.

"The foregoing are all capital. The *good* likenesses, Lords Bathurst, Edgcombe, Mahon, Temple, Bessborough, Hon. W. Pitt, Lord Fitzwilliam, Dr. Brocklesby, the Duke of Grafton, and the Archbishop of York, Chief Baron Skinner and the Duke of Cumberland.

"The *tolerable*; the Marquis of Rockingham, Lords Shelburne, Radnor, Effingham, Cholmondeley, the present Lord Chatham, Scarsdale, Sandwich, Harcourt, Robert Bertie, Westcote, and the Dukes of Portland and Devonshire.

"The *execrable* are Lords North, Germaine, Fauconberg, Westmorland, Dartmouth, Coventry, Courtenay, Spencer; and the Dukes of Montague and Manchester, *cum multis aliis*.

"The Duke of Devonshire is a faint but just resemblance; Lord North is ill-treated, and Lord George Germaine is made to look like a buffoon. The Duke of Richmond, one of the principal figures in the piece, preserves a likeness, but such a likeness as I never desire to see again on canvas; such a likeness in my opinion as I have seen drawn with a piece of charcoal by the aid of a candle. It is indeed a profile but a profile of the first impression. The position of his body is as unnatural as his place is fictitious. He is made to stand on canvas as I will venture to say he never stood on his own legs.

"In a word, the whole seems to me, who was present at the sad catastrophe, to have been the work of the author's imagination, except in such instances as some of the noble Lords may have condescended to sit to him. In these instances Mr. Copley has acquitted himself ably; in every other his piece seems to be equally destitute of truth, design, or perspective. Most of the figures besides want expression, and the whole seems to form a kind of chaotic jumble of excellencies and defects. The drapery is in general well executed, and it is upon this account, I presume, that the painter chose to clothe his figures in scarlet and ermine.

"I forgot to observe that Lord Coventry is a very athletic

figure with a strongly marked countenance, and between fifty and sixty years old; but that Mr. Copley has thought fit to represent him as a *slim* young man, with a fair, vacant countenance, accompanied with all the flush of male comeliness."

Severe as this critic's comments are on the grouping of the Peers they are probably just, for although Copley may have endeavoured to place the principal actors in the scene with approximate correctness he appears to have cared little where he put the other figures. In a letter of his preserved at Belvoir he begs the Duke of Rutland to give him a sitting, and at the same time offers him his choice of two positions in the picture.

There appears to be no evidence whether or not the much-praised portrait of Lord Mansfield was painted without a sitting, as the writer in the *St. James's Chronicle* asserts. But the Chancellor sat to Copley soon after the exhibition of this picture and by so doing earned the praise of the *Public Advertiser*, which had more than once reproved him for an alleged want of taste in his choice of painters. When Copley's portrait was shown at the Royal Academy the *Public Advertiser* took the opportunity of "congratulating the Noble Lord who is the subject of it on the apparent melioration of his taste. As long as we can remember he has been in the worst hands, Ramsay, Martin and so on. From them up to the artist at present before us is a large stride and we do not despair of soon seeing him the Patron of Painters worth patronizing, Romney, Gainsborough and Reynolds."

It has never been known why Copley called his picture *The Death of the Earl of Chatham*, for although the statesman was in a precarious state of health when he broke down in the House of Lords on April 7th, 1778, his death did not take place until the eleventh of the following month, at his country house in Kent. According to a statement made five years after the death of Lord Chatham, his collapse in the House of Lords was largely due to the 'insanitary condition, and the want of ventilation, of the legislative chambers. The *Morning Chronicle* concluded an editorial note on this subject in 1783 by saying:—"The personal safety of the members demands that both houses should immediately, *during the present recess* adopt some effectual mode of ventilation. In co-operation with the above mentioned not inexpedient hint it is to be recollected as an indisputable fact that the foul and overheated air of the House of Lords was the efficient cause of Lord Chatham's death."

JAMES CHRISTIE AND THE KING

The success of the exhibition of the *Death of the Earl of Chatham* suggested to the American artist the painting of another picture in which portraiture of the nobility would be the principal motive. He thought that the ceremony of the institution of the Order of Knighthood of St. Patrick, which was to take place in Dublin in the summer of 1783, offered a fine subject for such a work, and in the spring of that year endeavoured to obtain the support of Lord Charlemont, then the principal patron of the fine arts in Ireland. He said, writing to Lord Charlemont on March 22nd, 1783:—

“Your known attachment to the polite arts has encouraged me to trouble your Lordship and to hope I shall stand excused when I inform you I know no personage to whom I can apply on the present occasion with more propriety than to your Lordship. The subject that now presents itself for the exercise of the pencil, and is one of the finest that modern times has given birth to, is the institution of the new Order of St. Patrick, a subject replete with every picturesque beauty, and invaluable from the portraits it will contain. I shall feel much regret should I meet with any impediments that should deprive me of the honour of making it one of the monuments I am ambitious to leave behind me.

“It is this desire, my Lord, that has so far superseded every consideration and has led me to presume on your Lordship’s goodness for the necessary means of information for that purpose. A near relation of mine, Mr. Pelham, who has the honour of being well known to your Lordship, and is well qualified to transmit to me sketches of the buildings where the scene lay, of the dresses etc., is going to Ireland in a few days, and I shall feel myself impressed with a sense of your Lordship’s condescension if you will permit him to wait on you and explain more particularly my design.”

The picture was never painted. Lord Charlemont’s reply to Copley’s letter has not been preserved, but apparently the artist found in it no encouragement to proceed with the “monumental” work, in the details of which he was to be assisted by his half-brother, Henry Pelham.

James Christie, who was prevented by Sir William Chambers from allowing Copley to use his room for the exhibition of *The Death of the Earl of Chatham*, probably acted under no legal compulsion. He realized, however, that Chambers was the repre-

sentative of the King and of the King's Royal Academy, and the auctioneer was too prudent a man to quarrel with George the Third. An incident recorded in the newspapers in the autumn of 1781 shows that Christie was on good terms with that most homely of monarchs. In October we are told that:—

“On Monday his Majesty passed by Westhorpe House near Marlow, the seat of the late Governor Winch. He sent one of his Equerries to enquire whose goods were selling by auction; when Mr. Christie requested his most dutiful respects might be presented to his Majesty for he wished to show him some very curious ivory chairs and a couch that were to be disposed of. His Majesty turned back and they were shown him on the lawn opposite the house and he liked them so well that he ordered them to be purchased for the Queen and they were sent immediately to the Queen's house at Windsor. The chairs cost fourteen and a half guineas each, the couch forty eight guineas, and two small cabinets forty five guineas.”

Christie's firm, known then as Christie and Ansell, was in 1781 growing steadily in strength and importance, but it did not yet occupy the predominant position attained in later years. In fact it appears temporarily to have lost ground not long afterwards for in June, 1785, the *Public Advertiser* in commending the “skill and readiness” shown by the founder of the firm when selling the pictures of Desenfans says:—“The time it seems is not far off when Christie will *again* have the best business. For good manners as well as better sense his example should be attended to by his brethren.” Throughout the eighteenth century the West End auction rooms were among the most favoured resorts of people of social importance, and the interesting personality of Christie helped to draw to his house in Pall Mall the connoisseurs, the artists, and the rich idlers of both sexes. A passage in *Town Eclogues* shows that as early as 1772 a visit to Christie's was regarded as an essential duty for the woman who wished to be in the fashion:—

“The cautious mother well these maxims tried,
And plunged her daughter deep in pleasure's tide.
She left no dangerous moment unemployed,
No tempting dissipation unenjoyed:
In one continual hurry rolled her days
At routs, assemblies, auctions, op'ras, plays,

BATE DUDLEY AND HIS NOTES ON ART

Subscription balls and visits without end,
And poor Cornelys owned no better friend.
From Loo she rises with her rising sun
And Christie sees her aching head at one."

Despite the absence of Copley and De Louthembourg the Academy of 1781 was of uncommon interest, owing to the contributions of the President and Gainsborough, whose claims to supremacy were supported by rival newspapers. Gainsborough was backed by the Reverend Henry Bate Dudley, the parson-journalist who in the *Morning Post* had led the chorus of applause which greeted the painter on his return to the Academy in 1777. Bate Dudley (known to a later generation as Sir Henry Bate-Dudley) had now left the *Morning Post* and was the sole proprietor of the newly founded *Morning Herald*, in which he revived his strenuous advocacy of Gainsborough and maintained it till the end of the artist's life.

Bate Dudley, happily, did not pretend to technical knowledge, and instead of criticisms which from him could have possessed at the best only a topical interest, he wrote numerous descriptive notes, and articles, almost invariably flattering, about Gainsborough's pictures and the incidents of his career. From these notes and articles nearly all our knowledge of Gainsborough's career in London has been derived; and while I cannot accept the claim made for Bate Dudley by one of his contemporaries that he "principally contributed" to the artist's success, there can be no doubt that Gainsborough owed much of his contemporary popularity to the consistent and whole-hearted support of the *Morning Herald*, a journal that appears to have been read for the sake of its art news by some who disagreed with its politics. Even Walpole, who detested Bate Dudley, read his paper. This I know by the cuttings from the *Morning Herald*, describing Gainsborough's pictures, finished and unfinished, that are pasted in the copies of Walpole's Academy catalogues, now in the possession of Lord Rosebery. The champion who supported Gainsborough against Reynolds did not escape the criticisms of the friends of the President, and in the *London Courant*, in 1781, he was contemptuously reproved for the "impertinent and ignorant rapture" with which in his review of the Academy, he had mentioned the name of the Suffolk painter.

Later, Bate Dudley was attacked by a writer in *The World*, a

friend of De Louthembourg, who said that in the *Morning Herald* Gainsborough was "always puffed in the same page Mr. Louthembourg is abused in." But nothing could check or temper the enthusiasm of this fervent admirer of Gainsborough whose pictures he continued not only to praise incessantly but also to buy; and to whom he sat at least three times for portraits, one of which, a head and bust, is in the National Gallery. Another, a whole length, was at the Academy of 1780 and was admired even by Bate Dudley's enemy, Walpole. Bate Dudley's wife also sat to Gainsborough for a whole length which it is said was painted at Bradwell, in Essex, of which parish the editor of the *Morning Herald* was curate and owner of the advowson, and where he farmed two or three thousand acres, kept a pack of hounds and entertained his friends royally. He died in 1824, but his portrait and that of his wife remained on the walls of the rectory until 1850. They were then purchased by a member of a well-known Essex family, Mr. J. Oxley Parker, and were in his possession until 1887, when he sold them to the late Lord Burton.

Gainsborough was represented at the Academy of 1781 by seven pictures, including portraits of the King and Queen; a pastoral study *A Shepherd*, which was the most popular work in the exhibition, and two seascapes which cannot now be identified. Bate Dudley says that they were his "first attempts in this line," but does not say when they were painted, and some interesting new information acquired since I wrote my life of Gainsborough suggests that some of his seascapes were produced at Bath ten years at least before the exhibition of 1781. Gainsborough painted few seascapes and the best known of his existing works of this nature are *A Coast Scene*, belonging to the Duke of Westminster; and the *Coast Scene—Dragging Nets* which is now in America, in the collection of Mr. George Gould, by whom it was shown in the English section of the Paris Exhibition of 1900.

The new information in question, given to me by Mr. A. Clark Kennedy, relates particularly to the *Coast Scene—Dragging Nets*, which was purchased from Gainsborough by Mr. Edward Holden Cruttenden, and remained in the possession of his family until it was sold to Mr. Gould. Mr. Cruttenden, who was Mr. Clark Kennedy's great-great-grandfather, was a Director of the East India Company. He was Lieutenant-Governor of Fort William, Calcutta, when Surajah Dowlah captured the place and confined the English prisoners in the "Black Hole," where most

of them died of thirst or suffocation. The Lieutenant-Governor, who was fortunate enough to escape on to a ship in the Hooghly, returned to England, and until his death in 1771 spent the season regularly at Bath, the most fashionable of English pleasure resorts, where Gainsborough was then living. Mr. Cruttenden gave commissions to many artists of the time, and Sir Joshua painted for him a portrait group of his son and two daughters, with their ayah.

Mr. Clark Kennedy says that Gainsborough undertook to paint two seascapes for the East India Director, one of which, the *Coast Scene—Dragging Nets*, was finished and sent home. The other was still on the easel at Bath when Mr. Cruttenden was suddenly attacked by the gout. According to the story that has been handed down in the family from generation to generation, a Welsh baronet (a Williams or a Bulkeley Williams) saw the second seascape on the easel at the time Mr. Cruttenden was ill and offered Gainsborough a good price for it. The picture was a commission, but the artist, not too well off just then, was tempted to sell it, because he thought that he could easily paint another seapiece in its place before his first patron got better. Unfortunately for Gainsborough the gout left Mr. Cruttenden as suddenly as it attacked him, and the old gentleman immediately “stumped round to see if his picture was finished, and discovering what had happened left the house in a rage, declaring that he would never employ the artist again, and never did.” It is believed that the second seapiece was the Duke of Westminster’s picture, *A Coast Scene*, and Mr. Clark Kennedy says that the first Duke of Westminster tried to acquire from his father, Colonel J. Clark Kennedy, C.B., the companion work *Coast Scene—Dragging Nets*. Its owner, however, declined to part with it and proposed instead that the Duke should sell him *A Coast Scene* on the ground that it should by rights have belonged to his family.

The seascapes were not the only commissions given by Mr. Cruttenden to Gainsborough, who painted for him on one canvas the portraits of his two daughters, one of whom, Miss Sarah Cruttenden, was a noted beauty and toast of the day. This portrait group was exhibited in 1885 in the Gainsborough exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery, where the *Coast Scene—Dragging Nets*, lent by Mrs. Clark Kennedy, was shown at the same time.

Gainsborough's prestige was increased in 1781 by his seascapes and landscape, and by his *Shepherd Boy*; but his work was outshone collectively by that of Sir Joshua whose fifteen contributions to the Academy this year included the group of the three Ladies Waldegrave; portraits of the Duchess of Rutland and Lord Richard Cavendish, and of the godson of Reynolds, the little boy whose picture is known to-day as the *Master Bunbury*. The group of the Ladies Waldegrave was painted for their great-uncle, Horace Walpole, who loved and admired his three charming great-nieces and had been disappointed in 1780 with the whole-length group of Lady Maria and Lady Horatia, *Portraits of Two Ladies* (146), exhibited by Ozias Humphry.

In his Academy catalogue of 1780 Walpole writes against the title of Humphry's picture, "Lady Maria and Lady Horatia. Lady Horatia not nearly so handsome as she is." Sir Joshua, however, seems in his group of 1781 to have satisfied the critical great-uncle, at least for a time, for in his catalogue of that year Walpole says of the group of the three girls that it is "a most beautiful composition, the portraits very like, the attitudes natural and easy." Walpole was less pleased with it afterwards, but it was admired by all the contemporary critics whose reviews of the Academy I have seen.

One of them, when rhapsodizing in the *Public Advertiser* over the beauty of Lady Horatia, enables us to identify her in the picture as the girl in profile working at the tambour, who is described as Lady Maria by Leslie and Taylor.

"Why," says this critic of 1781, "has Sir Joshua Reynolds in the charming picture of the Lady Waldegraves, given so scanty a portion of Lady Horatia's profile? Is it because it exceeded art to make a fac-simile—or wherefore?"

The same critic follows his comment on Lady Horatia by an interesting statement on the supposed improvement in the permanency of Sir Joshua's pigments and vehicles:—

"Fugitive colouring," he remarks, "has often been, and in some instances not without reason, imputed to Sir Joshua Reynolds. This imperfection, wherever it was visible, always arose from an attempt to improve that part of the art, the Doctrine of Colours; and this imperfection, from the experience of repeated attempts, is now no more. By better ascertaining the proportions of vehicle and colour, and by more happily adjusting the qualities of his vegetable and mineral

SIR JOSHUA'S FUGITIVE COLOURS

red, increasing the vermilion and diminishing the carmine, Sir Joshua has at length accomplished the one thing needful, and in the poet's wishful words has taught 'His transient tints no more to fly.'"

This information was probably obtained at Sir Joshua's house, if not from the painter himself, for at this time journalists seem to have been allowed free access to the "show-rooms" and occasionally to the studios of Reynolds and Gainsborough, and as far as I have been able to test it, the gossip of the studios as retailed in the newspapers was usually fairly accurate. For instance, in this same year of 1781 the reviewer of the Academy in the *Gazetteer* says of the *Master Bunbury* that the little model "was so vivacious that Sir Joshua could not have settled him in any steady posture if he had not told him an entertaining story, which fixed his attention"; and this is corroborated by the statement of Sir Charles Bunbury made many years afterwards, that the fairy tales told by Reynolds were the cause of "the pleased and wondering attention shown in the child's face."

Sir Joshua may or may not have made a new discovery about this time that increased the permanency of his pigments, but it is certain that after 1781 the once frequent jokes about his "flying colours" are rarely to be found in the newspapers; and that the *London Courant* in 1782 describes one of his portraits as an example of "a new and brilliant style of painting." In earlier years, as we have seen, attacks upon Reynolds for the fugitive nature of his colours were frequent; and in 1780, only a few months before the alleged improvement is noticed, he was abused for this failing in a violent but amusing letter that appeared in the *St. James's Chronicle*. Sir Joshua was told that his technical expedients might be excusable in a poor painter whose Sunday dinner depended upon the rapid movements of his brush, but that in a man of his eminence they were "mean, reproachful and dishonest." The writer then tells a story of a portrait of Sir Walter Blackett by Reynolds for which two hundred guineas had been paid, which faded suddenly while the original was away in London on a visit. The ladies of the family were terrified at the change, and dreading that it was a premonition of Sir Walter's death sent an express to town to inform him of the circumstance. He returned to his country seat, where the portrait was, and laughed at the superstitious fears of his women-

kind: "but in justice to the artist wrote the following epigram and inscribed it on the picture in letters of gold":—

"The Art of Painting clearly was designed
To bring the features of the dead to mind,
But this damned painter hath reversed the plan
And made the picture die before the man."

It is uncertain when the instability of the tints of Sir Joshua's pictures was first the subject of complaint, but as early as 1763 Walpole remarked of a full length of the Duke of Cumberland which he saw at Hinchinbrooke, "the colours are much changed." Although after 1781 the newspapers said little on the subject, the danger of fading was for some years frequently prejudicial to the character of the artist's work. When Lady Grantham wrote in 1784 to her father Lord Hardwicke, about choosing an artist to paint the portraits of her little sons, she said:—"Sir Joshua is undoubtedly the best at discovering children's characters, but the uncertainty of his colouring is a provoking difficulty hard to be got over." According to a paragraph circulated in the newspapers of 1777, the expression "flying colours," as applied to Sir Joshua's work, originated at Christie's:—

"Sir Joshua Reynolds and another gentleman, when attending a capital sale of pictures some time since at Christie's, found a knot of connoisseurs sitting in judgment on a portrait of Sir Joshua's painting. They concluded their observations by remarking that the picture was nothing like what it had been two or three years ago, for the colours were fled. Sir Joshua, who had been unperceived by them during their criticisms, advanced with a smile upon his countenance, and returned them thanks for the honour they had conferred upon him. 'What honour?' said one of the critics covered with confusion. 'In allowing,' said the painter, 'that in the execution of my design I came off with flying colours.'"

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Marriage of Angelica Kauffman; Her early life; Dr. Morgan of Philadelphia; Lessons from Benjamin West; Admired by Dance; Rumoured engagement to Sir Joshua; Lætitia Hawkins' story; Dance the culprit? Picture frames; Barry and the Society of Arts; He is offered an American commission; Opie's sensational advent; "Beyond even Rembrandt"; Letter from Northcote on Opie and Wolcot; Sir Joshua and Gainsborough's "Girl with Pigs"; Missing portraits by Gainsborough; Death of Richard Wilson; Beechey's account of him; Sir Joshua on Wilson; His criticisms condemned in the "Morning Post"; Walpole and Wilson; Sandby on the methods of Wilson; Describes his palette; Wilson's son appeals to the Academy for help; A contemporary character of Wilson; Letter from him to Admiral Smith.

IT was in 1781 that England lost Angelica Kauffman, who in the autumn of that year was married in London to the Italian painter, Zucchi, and left for Switzerland immediately after the ceremony. How long she had been here is not known exactly, but she probably came to London in or about 1766. She had previously, in Italy, made many English and some American friends; and in 1765 had sent a portrait of Garrick to the exhibition of the Free Society. One of her American acquaintances was Dr. John Morgan, the eminent physician of Philadelphia. Dr. Morgan had come to Europe for professional study and was introduced to Angelica in Rome, where she was copying in the galleries and had injured her health by too intense application. The doctor prescribed for her and cured her. He refused to take a fee; but when she offered instead a painting from her own hand, begged for a portrait of herself. This she sent to him when she arrived in London and he took it home with him when he returned to America. Dr. Morgan, who was much impressed not only by her skill in painting but by her general ability and charm of manner, says of Angelica in writing to a correspondent at Philadelphia in 1774:—

“At the age of ten years she spoke English and French as familiarly as if they were her native language, which she learned chiefly by conversation. She could read Spanish with equal ease, though for want of opportunities to practice it did not pretend to be mistress of it; but she was quite mistress of the Italian, and of German which was her native tongue. She had an agreeable person, a sweet and open countenance, of a very modest, engaging deportment, and was no small proficient

in music. At her first coming to England she was soon presented to the Queen and employed to take her Majesty's portrait. In short she was in a fair way to rising to fame, to honour and fortune, but an unlucky marriage was a great clog to her."

In Italy she met also Benjamin West and Nathaniel Dance, and it was there probably that she painted the portrait of Garrick, of which, when it was shown at the Free Society's gallery, a critic remarked that it was a good likeness but larger than life. Benjamin West, judging by an article on Angelica in *La Belle Assemblée* in 1808 which I think was inspired by him, regarded himself as in some degree her teacher. The writer of the article says that she and the young American were introduced to one another in Florence by an Italian Marquis who was a great patron of the arts. "Mr. West was then copying from the eminent masters in the Gallery of Florence, and it was from him she received her first knowledge of the principles of composition, the importance of outline, and likewise of the proper combinations and mixtures of colour."

West, whether her teacher or not, appears to have escaped heart whole from the society of the captivating young artist; but Dance, less fortunate, fell desperately in love with her. Farington says that they were engaged when she came to London and that she threw him over at a moment's notice and in doing so almost wrecked his life. Anthony Pasquin and others also refer to the hopelessness of Dance's attachment, and hint that Angelica dismissed him because she saw a chance of capturing the more prosperous Sir Joshua. Pasquin says that the President did not respond, or at all events not sufficiently. But there is evidence to the contrary stronger than his, evidence that has been cited by no biographer of Angelica Kauffman. Bate Dudley, who was singularly well acquainted with the affairs of the artists of his time, commenting on her marriage in the *Morning Herald* a few days after its celebration in 1781, said:—

"She has long refused many advantageous offers of various suitors, and among them one from Sir Joshua Reynolds, who at the same time that he admired her style of painting thought Angelica a divine subject to adorn the hymeneal temple."

This statement appeared in Sir Joshua's lifetime when he was at the height of his reputation and was never challenged.

Angelica's union with Zucchi was, as I have said, her second matrimonial venture. The first was in 1767, the one mentioned

NATHANIEL DANCE AND ANGELICA

by Dr. Morgan, that disastrous marriage to a supposed Count who was really a servant. The complete story of that marriage, at St. James's, Piccadilly, has never been told, but some of the foreign biographers of the artist hint that it was a plot designed to ruin her by a disappointed and revengeful lover. With this plot they have connected Sir Joshua's name, though with no apparent reason except that he was an admirer of the victim. Lætitia Hawkins, in her *Memoirs* published some years after Angelica's death, says of the alleged plot:—

"I have heard it said that she was addressed by a painter of the first eminence—I do not like to name him, it was not Sir Joshua—she refused him and in cruel revenge he dressed up a smart fellow of a low description but of some talent. This man he introduced to her as a person of distinction, and teaching him to profess a passion for her, his specious recommendations deceived her and she married him. They parted immediately—I hope the story may not be true."

Can Nathaniel Dance have been the painter of the first eminence whose name Miss Hawkins withholds? He is mentioned with Angelica in "Fresnoy's" article attacking the Royal Academicians which I quote in Vol. II on p. 276, from the *Middlesex Journal* of 1770, and the connection seems to be capable of a sinister interpretation. The writer is describing an imaginary meeting of the Academicians at which they discuss his criticisms of their affairs, and he says, after ridiculing the manner of Hayman and others:—

"Hark! Now doth Mr. Dance growl in horrid language some horrid opinion of me, which he finishes with an explanatory muttering. I wish he would tell us his story of *Angelica*, for Brutus is an *honourable* man—all know it."

Angelica Kauffman, who charmed Reynolds and Dance in her youth, and such men as Goethe and Herder when she was middle-aged, is now little regarded as an artist, but Joseph Moser, who knew her well, says that at one time the popularity of her designs was extraordinary. He mentions particularly her picture of Sterne's "Maria." "The prints from it," he says, "were circulated all over Europe. In the elegant manufactures of London, Birmingham, etc., it assumed an incalculable variety of forms and dimensions, and was transferred to numerous articles of all sorts and sizes, from a watch case to a tea-waiter." Angelica lived with her father, also a painter, in Golden Square, where she gave

Sunday evening parties that were very popular. Of her father, a worthy man but a poor artist, Moser tells a curious story.

One day his cousin, Mary Moser, went to Golden Square to see some of the work of her sister-Academician. Angelica, unfortunately was out, but Mr. Kauffman said he would be delighted to display the contents of the show-room. Miss Moser, when she first saw the pictures, started with surprise. She recognized some of the subjects as similar to those she had seen on the occasion of a previous visit, yet the drawing and colouring were different. How could this be accounted for? Mr. Kauffman, watching her puzzled expression, at last owned that he made a practice of copying many of his daughter's pictures and liked to show them to artists in the hope that they would be deceived.

In a long and thoughtful letter published in 1781 in the *Morning Chronicle* a question was raised that has been discussed frequently in our own times—whether exhibitions such as those held by the Royal Academy and other societies are beneficial to the arts or the reverse? The writer questions their good influence and anticipates one objection to exhibitions, frequently urged by modern critics, that their tendency is to make the artist force his effects. He complains also that with the idea of making their works more assertive the exhibitors cumber the Academy with “massy gold frames” some of which are so elaborate that “the carver rather than the artist deservedly claims our attention.” This contradicts the claim of Northcote, made in his old age, that the eighteenth-century painters were modest in their frames. He declared that it was Lawrence who made expensive and elaborate surroundings to pictures fashionable, “a piece of quackery that was never thought of by Sir Joshua,” whose frames for his subject pictures were only two inches deep. But a letter from Sir Joshua to the Duke of Rutland shows that he thought a striking frame improved a picture. The Duke had entrusted to him some newly purchased examples of Poussin for renovation, and Sir Joshua, writing in 1787, says, “I have order'd very handsome frames for them at ten guineas each, and very broad, which, I think, gives a picture a more consequential air.”

The writer of the above letter in the *Morning Chronicle* says that one man of genius, Barry, has wisely withdrawn his works from exhibitions, and Barry certainly sent nothing to the Academy after 1776. But it is probable that the ferocity of some of the criticisms on his pictures had more to do with their with-

drawal at first than the supposed evil tendencies of exhibitions; and his absence from the Academy in 1781 is fully explained by the fact that his energies were concentrated upon the execution of the paintings in the great room of the Society of Arts. His task was prodigious, and although the result was unfortunate, Barry deserves high credit for his heroic efforts continued for six years, "without patron, fortune or encouragement," and with only the smallest means of subsistence. He told Blake that during this period he lived chiefly on bread and apples; but the apples are unmentioned in the curious account of his proceedings given to Haydon by Miss Corkings, the old housekeeper at the hall of the Society of Arts, where she had lived since her girlhood. She said that Barry when painting the pictures had a penny roll, and tea boiled in a quart pot, for his breakfast; dined in Porridge Island, and made his supper of milk which was prepared in the house. "Porridge Island" was the popular name given to a group of cheap eating-houses in the courts and alleys near St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Miss Corkings said of Barry's conduct that "his violence was dreadful, his oaths horrid, and his temper like insanity. The servants were afraid to go near him. In summer he came to work at five and worked till dark, when a lamp was lighted and he went on etching till eleven at night." The old lady admitted that when the painter could be coaxed to talk, "his conversation was sublime."

In 1782 a compliment was paid to Barry by the Government of the United States. "Mr. Barry," says the *Morning Herald*, "has been invited by Congress to America, to paint the actions of General Washington. Mr. Laurens had the commission to engage those whom he thought fit, and viewed all the works of the great painters now in London, after which he fixed on Mr. Barry; who, it is said, has refused the offer." It is curious that Laurens, at this time one of the representatives of the United States in England, should have invited Barry to depict the actions of Washington when two Americans were available. Benjamin West was regarded as a genius by a considerable section of the public, and his picture *The Death of General Wolfe* was one of the most popular works of its kind. In John Singleton Copley America possessed an artist of ability whose talents were exactly suitable for the representation of the achievements of the great President, and yet we are told that in preference to such a man Laurens chose Barry, who according to Edwards had in 1776

exhibited a picture of a battle in America so classical in treatment that it represented "a combat of naked men." Edwards, however, may have been mistaken about this picture, which was *The Death of General Wolfe*. Little is known of it, and a description given in the *Public Advertiser*, of May 4th, 1776, seems to throw doubt upon the nudity of the contending troops. The writer of this description mentions among the figures depicted a naval officer and a midshipman; and two Grenadiers who support the dying general. How could he have identified naval officers and Grenadiers if all the combatants were nude?

A new star rose at the Royal Academy of 1782 in the person of John Opie. "The Cornish Wonder," as he was called, had exhibited for the first time two years earlier at the gallery of the Incorporated Society of Artists where one of his studies, *A Boy's Head*, was given a place through the influence of Lord Bateman. *A Boy's Head* had attracted considerable attention in 1780 because it was described as the work of a young artist who had never seen a picture; but Opie's contributions to the Academy of 1782 seem completely to have turned the heads of some of the critics. He is rapturously described in various reviews of the exhibition as "this wonderful youth"; as one who in effect is "beyond even Rembrandt"; and as "a genius, self-educated, till very lately from the mines of Cornwall, whose works rival the great masters, ancient and modern." A fourth critic says, more accurately, that he came from a Cornish sawpit, and adds, "There is a maturity and judgment, a truth and force of colouring in his portraits which are astonishing. We hope Sir Joshua Reynolds will take some lessons of this young man before he leaves London."

This last suggestion is impudent enough for "Peter Pindar," and was not improbably made by him. For Northcote in a letter of this year asserts that Wolcot was making strenuous efforts to push Opie, whom he looked upon as his own discovery and property. Writing from Clifford Street, Bond Street, on May 31st, 1782, to William (afterwards Sir William) Elford in Devonshire, Northcote says of the young Cornishman and some of his recent commissions:—

"Opie has not made the portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester well or like; and the Duchess told me that she did not like his portraits, and Lord Harcourt for whom he did the Duke's said he had neither taste or invention or could copy what he saw, but this I believe is speaking too serious of him.

"(As) however, he has powerful and indefatigable friends who leave no stone unturned to do him service he is yet in high credit and employment. Wolcot is always with him and is as conceited, vulgar and jawing as ever; writing poetry for ever, songs, verses on the painters, and things in the newspapers on his adopted; and takes all the merit on himself, wanting to make Opie as a mere machine which he has inspired with this power; but Opie himself seems to have great simplicity, good sense, and no conceit that I can see."

Walpole in noting Opie's first appearance at the Academy in 1782 writes in his catalogue against No. 199, *Country Boy and Girl*, that it is the work of "a lad of nineteen who taught himself to paint by having poor people and children sit to him." That Opie was self-taught was generally believed in 1782, and this belief agrees with all that we know of his life, for Wolcot's lessons could have taught him little, if anything, about painting. But three years afterwards, when the fashion for Opie had declined, the *St. James's Chronicle* asserted that he had owed his early success to foreign training. In reviewing the Academy of 1785 the critic of the *St. James's Chronicle*, after condemning the black and heavy tones of Opie's pictures, laments the falling off in his work and regards it as the effect of the flattery of 1782—especially that of Sir Joshua. He says:—

"Mr. Opie might have proved a great acquisition to the arts if his progress had *been reported* to have been less rapid; for he had studied on the Continent when it was said he started at once into fame from some poor and mechanic employment. Nay, the man who affects to dictate to the arts, the Modern Raphael, as everyone who would succeed at the Royal Academy must call him, chose to say—"This youth begins where most artists leave off." Such praise may have been fatal to poor Opie."

It is not surprising that on the strength of the extravagant laudations which were bestowed upon his pictures in 1782 the raw country boy of twenty-one put his name down immediately as a candidate for the A.R.A.; but he had to wait four years for his election. A few weeks before the opening of the exhibition at which his work caused so much sensation, the King commissioned Opie to paint the portrait of Mrs. Delany, and also purchased two of his studies of heads, but on terms that were not altogether satisfactory to the young artist. Miss Ada Earland in

her well-informed life of Opie gives his own version of the transaction, upon which further light is thrown by a letter from William Mason to Lord Harcourt:—

"I will finish this letter," says Mason, "with a golden story which Miss F(auquier) if still with you will sparkle at. Your Lordship knows that Mrs. Delany sat to Opie for the King. The said King also fixed upon two of his best beggarmen's heads for his cabinet. The boy thought his fortune made and put the three pictures in fine frames accordingly. In process of time his Majesty sent his Prime Minister in Virtu, West, to know their price, adding that the King on this occasion expected to be treated as a *private gentleman*. The poor boy was thunderstruck and said that if that was the case he could only say that he painted a head for four guineas—forgetting to mention the frames! The next day the three pictures were sent for and paid for, and his Majesty possesses the frames *gratis*."

Northcote says that Reynolds was so much impressed by the early work of Opie that he compared him with Caravaggio, but we are not told what the President thought of the proposition of 1782, that he should take lessons from the youth of the sawpit. Reynolds at the Academy of that year was still in "proud rivalry" with Gainsborough, the only man worthy to be his competitor, and with whom for a brief space he was now upon terms of outward amity.

It was in the year of Opie's appearance that Reynolds bought Gainsborough's *Girl with Pigs*, a chivalrous action that was approved by Dr. Johnson, who declared that "such instances of homage to contemporary talent—these men being considered by the world as rivals—may be received as a testimony of the improved moral advantages of the high civilization to which our age has attained." When Queen Charlotte heard of the purchase of the *Girl with Pigs* by Sir Joshua, she said it was more flattering to Gainsborough than if the picture had been acquired for a Royal gallery, a statement which few would dispute. With the hundred guineas he paid for the picture Sir Joshua sent a long letter containing, in the words of Bate Dudley, "half as many elegant compliments on the merit of the artist." This letter would be priceless to-day but it was probably destroyed by Gainsborough who does not appear to have preserved any of the correspondence addressed to him.

MISSING PORTRAITS BY GAINSBOROUGH

The commonly accepted story that Gainsborough asked sixty guineas for his picture and that Reynolds gave him a hundred, is almost certainly a fable. It has been accepted because it is told by Northcote in his life of Reynolds, but Northcote's only authority for the story was an ill-informed article in the *European Magazine*. Bate, who knew all about the transaction, says nothing of an increased price, and he would not have failed to mention in the *Morning Herald* such a flattering attention on the part of Sir Joshua. Nor does Gainsborough hint at anything of the kind in his note of thanks, or his receipt for Sir Joshua's cheque, of which the following are copies:—

“SIR JOSHUA,

I think myself highly honoured and much obliged to you for this singular mark of your favour; I may truly say I have brought my Piggs to a fine market.

Dear Sir,

Your ever obliged and obedient servant,
THO. GAINSBOROUGH.”

“*April 20th, 1782.*

Received of Sir Joshua Reynolds One hundred guineas in full for a picture of ‘A Girl with Piggs’ and all demands. £105.
THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH.”

In the autumn of 1782 the rival painters came into closer contact when Reynolds went to Gainsborough's house to sit for a portrait. For some unknown reason the sittings were not continued and the unfinished portrait of Sir Joshua has suffered the same fate as his letter. It has disappeared, and so too have three portraits upon which Gainsborough was engaged in November, 1782, the month in which Reynolds sat to him. The lost portraits are those of the beautiful Duchess of Rutland, whom Reynolds had painted in the preceding year; Lady Priscilla Burrell; and Lady Stormont. There is no portrait of the Duchess of Rutland by Gainsborough at Belvoir, and I have found no trace anywhere of the existence of such a work. Nor have I been able to find the portrait of Lady Priscilla Burrell, the daughter of the Duke of Ancaster and the wife of Sir Peter Burrell, afterwards Lord Gwydyr, who bought from Gainsborough the well-known landscape, *The Market Cart*, now in the National Gallery.

Of exceptional interest, if it exists, must be the third Gains-

borough portrait, that of Lady Stormont, afterwards Countess of Mansfield, records of whose beauty have been preserved in her portrait by Romney, and in the *Journal and Correspondence of Miss Adams*, daughter of the John Adams who was American Ambassador to England in 1785, and afterwards President of the United States. Miss Adams, who saw Lady Stormont at one of Queen Charlotte's Drawing Rooms, describes her as "the handsomest woman I have seen in Europe. When she converses her air and manner are graceful, dignified, charming and modest. The King, Queen and Prince of Wales had a great deal to say to her, particularly the latter." Miss Adams says that the Prince conversed with Lady Stormont for an hour, despite the desperate efforts of some "Lady C." to induce him to talk to her daughter. Lady Stormont was the younger sister of Mrs. Graham, the original of Gainsborough's full length at Edinburgh.

By the death of Richard Wilson in 1782 the Royal Academy lost one of the most distinguished of its original members. The landscape painter died in his native country, Wales, to which he had retired a broken and disappointed man. Wilson, whose work at the earlier exhibitions of the Society of Artists was always treated respectfully by the critics, and its eminence acknowledged, appears to have outlived his contemporary fame, for in none of the newspapers of 1782 have I seen any reference to his death. Sir William Beechey, who knew him well, once described to Mr. Harvey of Catton his visit to Wilson just before the Welsh artist left London, where for some time he had been living in comparative poverty. Beechey was staying at Catton when his host showed him a picture that he had bought from Wilson many years before, and asked his opinion of it. It was recognized immediately by Beechey as an early Wilson, "full of fire and painted off at once." He said:—

"It was painted when he was at the height of his admiration for Mompers, whom it is very like. I was for a long time on the most intimate terms with Wilson and I once asked him whom he considered the best landscape painter. 'Why Sir,' said he, 'Claude for air and Gaspar (Poussin) for composition and sentiment; you may walk in Claude's pictures and count the miles. But there are two painters whose merit the world does not yet know, who will not fail hereafter to be highly valued, Cuyp and Mompers.' Cuyp's pictures were then selling so low that when Wilson and I one day went into Christie's

rooms where a large one was about to be offered by auction:—
 ‘Any wager,’ said he, ‘that that picture does not fetch above thirty guineas, and yet you will live to see it fetch more than five hundred.’ It was actually knocked down for forty guineas and has since realized a still larger sum than he mentioned.

“Wilson was a man full of information and anecdote, and no less full of satire. He had a deep feeling of the importance of his art and of his own importance as a professor of it. Humour him but upon this point and he would be most agreeable. I never knew him out of temper except when talking of Barret, who was then the great favourite and universally patronized, so that he rode in his carriage while Wilson could scarcely get his daily bread. He used to call Barret’s pictures *Spinach and Eggs* and Gainsborough’s *Fried Parsley*. The last time I saw Wilson was when he was on the point of leaving London; and I then took a gentleman to him who by buying all his sketch books supplied him with money for the journey. ‘Young man,’ said he, on parting, ‘I may never meet you again, but depend upon it you will live to see my pictures rise in esteem and price’—and here he paused—‘when Barret’s are forgotten.’”

A more intimate but less attractive description of Wilson was given by Beechey to Holcroft. Beechey said of Wilson that he had much comic humour, and would turn from his easel to the window to make whimsical remarks on the passers-by; then pause, and, recollecting himself, begin painting again:—

“Wilson was indolent, and in his later time used to make several attempts at each touch before he had reached the precise place. He was much addicted to liquor, and glad of any opportunity to escape from labour to his favourite indulgence. He would say, if an acquaintance happened to call, ‘Come, let us go and take a drop of something. I have painted enough for one day.’ Farington and Hodges were his pupils, and many of the pictures that pass for Wilson’s were painted by them but retouched by himself. Thus the same picture became multiplied. He would even buy copies made from his own pictures, work upon them, and sell them as his own. To a certain degree they were such, but the practice was dishonest, for an unskilful eye could not detect the inferior parts.”

This, of course, is a glimpse of the painter when old, and driven by poverty to all sorts of expedients in the endeavour to

earn a subsistence. But even in his best times he appears to have enjoyed little prosperity, for his work was beyond the public taste, although appreciated by artists and by such enlightened amateurs as Henry Blundell, who not only bought Wilson's landscapes but invited him to Ince in order that he might hang them in suitable lights. Wolcot (Peter Pindar) recognized this and prophesied his future fame in those frequently quoted lines:—

“But honest Wilson, never mind;
Immortal praises thou shalt find,
And for a dinner have no cause to fear,
Thou start'st at my prophetic rhymes:
Don't be impatient for those times;
Wait till thou hast been dead a hundred year.”

Wilson was on notoriously bad terms with Sir Joshua, who was blamed by some of his contemporaries for his insufficient appreciation of the landscape painter and for refraining from paying any tribute to him until more than six years after his death. He died in 1782 and it was not until December, 1788, that the President in his Fourteenth Discourse (which was devoted chiefly to a consideration of Gainsborough) criticized the pictures of “our late ingenious Academician, Wilson,” in terms that if not flattering were not altogether unfair. However they displeased Wilson's friends, one of whom took Reynolds publicly to task for what he considered to be the unfortunate character of his remarks on the dead painter. He says, in a letter to the *Morning Post*:—

“It is an extraordinary circumstance that Sir Joshua Reynolds in his last discourse to the Academy should have so slightly touched on the character of so eminent an artist as the late Wilson—a classic in landscape. How has the President's liberality slept! Why was not the great artist mentioned in the President's discourse that succeeded poor Wilson's death? Where was the candour in condemning a few peccadilloes such as the introduction of unnecessary figures into his landscape, when such a field presented itself for applause? In general, Wilson's figures are introduced with the happiest effect and touched with inimitable spirit. Should not some of these have been adverted to, and have raised a tone of admiration? Fie, Sir Joshua! You disclaimed in your Academic

discourse an imputed mean jealousy of Gainsborough. Upon what principle will you justify your long silence on the great abilities of Wilson, and the illiberal attack upon him when his universal fame forced him on your attention and rendered him an object of remark?"

We know little of the quality of Wilson's later work, executed in his worst period of poverty, but Edward Edwards who championed him against Sir Joshua (and was ridiculed for this by Hoppner) admits that he became careless towards the end of his life. His last exhibited landscape, a view of Sir John Leicester's seat at Tabley, shown in 1780, was described as "a most beautiful picturesque scene" by one critic; who hastens to add:—"This is an old picture, painted in his prime." Walpole does not seem to have had much admiration for Wilson's pictures. He rarely mentions them in his notes on the exhibitions and praises them, if at all, with none of the enthusiasm with which he writes of the landscapes of Gainsborough. The author of a pamphlet of 1771, *Observations on the Pictures now exhibiting at the Royal Academy*, mentions Wilson's landscapes in a complimentary paragraph, and Walpole has corrected this in his own copy of the pamphlet by writing on the margin "Hard as bas-reliefs."

One of Wilson's staunchest supporters was Paul Sandby, his fellow-Academician, who bought his sketches and studies at a time when there were no other purchasers even at the lowest price. Sandby had many pupils whom Wilson hoped might buy his work if it were brought to their notice and with this idea sent a selection of sketches to his friend. Sandby, a man of whom nothing but good is recorded, tried in vain to dispose of them; and then, knowing the desperate position of the landscape painter, pretended that his pupils had bought them and paid Wilson out of his own pocket.

Sandby was deeply interested in all the technicalities of painting and took pains to collect information about the methods of some of the artists whom he knew and the pigments and mediums they used.

He obtained from Wilson a plan of his palette which shows how inaccurate is the information about this painter's colours given by his biographer, Thomas Wright, who claims that the particulars appearing in his book were obtained from "a very authentic source." His authority was an amateur artist who gathered his list of Wilson's colours from another person who

THE PALETTE OF RICHARD WILSON, R.A.
as described by PAUL SANDBY, R.A.

Light Red, Ivory Black and Brown Pink		Light Red and Ivory Black	
Black with more White	○	Brown Pink	○
Black and White	○	Light Red and Brown Pink	○
Light Red and White	○	Light Red and Terre Verte	○
Light Ochre and White	○	Prussian Blue and Terre Verte	○
		Light Ochre and more Terre Verte	○
		Light Ochre and Terre Verte	○
		Naples Yellow, Light Ochre and Terre Verte	○
		Naples Yellow	○
		Ivory Black	○
		Prussian Blue	○
		Terre Verte	○
		Light Red	○
		Vermilion	○
		Light Ochre	○
		Flake White	○

WILSON'S METHODS OF PAINTING

said that it was given to him by Farington, who was Wilson's pupil. Wright says that Wilson's palette was composed of white, Naples yellow, vermilion, light ochre (yellow ochre), brown ochre, dark or Roman ochre, lake, yellow lake, lamp-black, Prussian blue, ultramarine and burnt sienna. How far these particulars are from the truth may be seen from the representation given on the preceding page of the plan of Wilson's set palette copied from Sandby's own sketch.

Its arrangement is uncommon, as painters will observe; and of the colours mentioned by Wright it does not include ultramarine, burnt sienna, brown ochre, Roman ochre, lake or yellow lake. Wright's list omits entirely two of Wilson's most favoured pigments, brown pink and terre verte, the last named of which appears to have been indispensable to the painter as it figures no fewer than six times on his palette, singly or in combination with other colours.

Wilson's palette as given by Sandby is composed of flake-white, Naples yellow, yellow ochre, Prussian blue, light red, ivory black, vermilion, brown pink and terre verte. This composition makes it difficult to understand why the critics of the period sometimes complained that Wilson's landscapes were too green. Their standard must have been different from ours, for it does not seem possible that greens which we should regard as too assertive could have been compounded from Wilson's list of colours. Of his method Sandby says:—"He painted with a powerful body in the dead colouring, chiefly in grey, except foregrounds which he painted at once. He left no high lights but put them on by dabs afterwards. Lastly he glazed a good deal but seldom or never scumbled."

Ozias Humphry, in an unpublished note on Wilson, says that he used ultramarine, which Sandby does not mention. But the note was written in 1773 and Sandby's list may have been compiled at a later period, after the landscape painter had been compelled by want of means to abandon this expensive colour. Humphry writes:—

"Mr. Wilson says the best and most expeditious mode of drawing landscapes from nature is with black chalk and a stump, on brownish paper touched with white. He lays in his skies with Prussian blue and finishes them with ultramarine; never attempts to finish them at once, does it sometimes in twice, but frequently paints them over six or seven times."

According to the author of *A Practical Treatise on Painting in Oil Colours*, published in 1795, Wilson sometimes used the fascinating but dangerous asphaltum, and used it successfully after he had prepared it in the following fashion:—

“Put two ounces of balsam of copaiba into a pipkin over a slow fire; let it simmer, and add one ounce of asphaltum, bruised, and as much spirit of turpentine as will make it liquid. Take care it does not catch fire.”

Twenty-four years after the artist's death, Prince Hoare, when discussing contemporary appreciation of men of genius, said that Wilson, “at present so highly estimated and whose works are now welcomed to all galleries, lived and died almost unknown beyond the circle of professional friendship,” and certainly our knowledge of his domestic life is almost negligible. To the best of my belief everyone who has written about him has assumed that he was a bachelor and had no family ties in the shape of wife or children. But some entries I found in the Council minutes of the Royal Academy prove that Wilson must have had connections of whom we know nothing.

Appeals to the Council by distressed artists and their relatives were frequent in the closing years of the eighteenth century and the minutes of the 29th of December, 1793, state that a letter was read “from Mr. John Wilson, son of the late Richard Wilson, R.A., praying for some assistance from the Academy.” There is no entry to show that help was given to John Wilson on this occasion, but when he applied a second time his claims were recognized by a gift of six guineas. It is strange that Farington, who was Wilson's pupil and must have known something about his son, does not mention him in his *Diary*, which contains many entries for July, 1796, when the award was made. Farington was on the Council in 1796 and the success of John Wilson's second application was perhaps due to his influence.

John was the Christian name of Wilson's father, according to the writer of a biographical sketch of the painter published in the *European Magazine* eight years after his death. The character given to Wilson in this sketch explains why he disagreed so frequently with his fellow-artists. He is described as honest and good-natured, but singularly irascible:—

“From the close attention he had given to his studies he had neglected to improve himself in the arts of modern politeness and policy. He usually spoke without reserve, and if any-

A LETTER FROM WILSON

thing occurred in conversation that displeased him (being very susceptible of hasty impressions) he soon took fire and would drop expressions of asperity which would frequently offend those who did not know him, but were pardoned by those who were acquainted with his friendly disposition."

The writer of this character says that when Wilson returned from Italy to settle in London he imitated for a time the manner of Zuccarelli, whose landscapes were then fashionable. "Mr. Wilson, finding that the light, airy style of that painter pleased the world, changed his style; but, disgusted at what he considered frivolity, he soon returned to his old pursuit, formed in the school of Rome."

To the Hon. Mrs. Hugh Wyndham we owe some new and valuable information about Wilson, which she discovered in the archives of the Lyttleton family and published in 1924 in her *Chronicles of the Eighteenth Century*. This information makes us better acquainted with the landscape painter's sister, Miss E. Wilson, who in a letter written from Bristol in 1750 defends her brother and endeavours to protect his interests. More valuable, however, is a letter from Wilson himself, written from Italy to his friend and patron, Admiral Smith, and this by the kind permission of Mrs. Wyndham I am able to quote below. Zuccarelli, who is mentioned in it, and to whose alleged temporary influence on Wilson's work I have just referred, came to England and settled in London not long after the meeting of the two artists in Venice. The "great loss" lamented by the writer in the second paragraph, is the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

Wilson's letter to Admiral Smith is dated Venice, July 8th, 1751, and runs as follows:—

"HON'D SIR,

I have by me a letter that I did myself the honour to write to Admiral Smith above four months agoe, which I deferred sending until I had something more worth your reading to inform you of; which has been deferred from one post to another that I really grew ashamed of writing to him that had the greatest title to my gratitude of any man breathing.

I came to Venice about eight months ago, where I met with the encouragement I mentioned in my letter to Dr. Ayscough, and here I have studied Titian as much as ever I could, which I hope to show you the effects of in my future productions. I

am doing a portrait for the German Ambassador among other things. What tells better for my private satisfaction is that Signor Zuccarelli, a famous painter of this place, made me an offer of his painting me a picture for a portrait of himself; which I am doing with great pleasure. I have great reason to condole the great loss we have lately sustained; but there is the same God though not the same Prince, who will protect you and my good friend from the vicissitudes of this life.

I can give you very little news from hence. We have had a very poor show here at the Ascension, the Prince being ill at the time of his wedding. The company here is my Lord Poultenev, Sir Matt: Featherstone, Sir William Lowther and Mr. Aldridge. Mr. Smith (blessed be the name) our Consul here, is exceedingly kind to me; he is a very great Virtuoso. Among other things he has got me the painting of Mr. Sackville, which he is to send to my Lord Middlesex; which I hope will do me much honour.

Good Admiral, I never write to you without asking some favour of you; the business of this is to let Mr. Travers send me a good account of your health and happiness, which I shall look at with more pleasure than the first picture of Michael Angelo could give to your ever obliged humble servant,

RICHD. WILSON."

In the year of Wilson's death the names of another Admiral and another painter were coupled in connection with a disgraceful act by an engraver. Earlom had nearly finished his plate of Tilly Kettle's portrait of Admiral Kempenfeldt when, on August 29th, 1782, the *Royal George* sank at Spithead with the Admiral and most of his crew. The whole country was shocked, a portrait of Kempenfeldt was in demand, and Kettle hoped for a large sale of his engraving. But before it could be published Robert Pollard, another engraver, called at Kettle's house, bribed his servant to let him see the portrait, and made a sketch of it. From this a small engraving was hastily executed, and offered for sale as "after the original picture painted by Kettle." The painter had no redress and Pollard boasted that 7,000 of his small prints were sold in two or three days.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Mauritius Lowe and his picture "The Deluge"; Rejected at the Academy; A great toe out of drawing; Dr. Johnson's intervention; Neglect of Romney by the newspapers; He paints Mrs. Siddons; Other portraits of his in progress in 1783; Reproved for not exhibiting; Mrs. Siddons sits to Lawrence and Beach; Horace Walpole on Sir Joshua; Garrick and Christie; Prediction of Hoppner's success; "He cannot fail to be a great painter"; Gainsborough's portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire; Was she a beauty?; The Duchess and the Westminster election; Bribery and corruption; The guinea kiss; Gainsborough and the Academy.

DR. JOHNSON, writing to Mrs. Thrale in the spring of 1783 about the Academy dinner and the opening of the exhibition, says:—"Poor Lowe met with some discouragement, but I interposed for him and prevailed." "Poor Lowe" was Mauritius Lowe the painter, the winner in 1769 of the first gold medal and travelling studentship for historical painting given by the Royal Academy. In 1783 his picture *The Deluge* was unanimously rejected by the Academy Council, but it was afterwards reconsidered and admitted by the personal solicitation of Dr. Johnson. The story of the rejection and Johnson's successful interposition has been told by Boswell, but some further light is thrown upon the subject by an article written by one of Lowe's friends in the *Public Advertiser*.

He tells us that the painter (who is said to have been a son of the second Lord Southwell) had been in an unprosperous condition for several years and as he had a family to support and things were going from bad to worse, he made up his mind in 1783 to paint a large picture that would compel attention to his work and could not be hidden away in a corner—a fate that had befallen some of his previous contributions to the exhibitions.

Lowe's subject was as ambitious as his canvas was large. It was suggested by a sentence in the sixth chapter of Genesis in which the antediluvian world is described, "There were giants in those days" and depicted an incident of the Flood at the moment when the rising water had submerged all the land except the highest peak. Lowe sent his picture to the Academy, where it was promptly rejected, and Johnson who asked the reason privately of Sir Joshua "was informed by the President that it wanted correction before it could be exhibited." Hearing this the author of *The Deluge* hastened to the house of Sir Joshua and by his own account embarrassed him considerably by asking

point blank what correction the picture required? And the President, driven into a corner, could only say that he thought that one of the giant's great toes was out of drawing.

This is the story told by Lowe's friend, and we know from the letters quoted by Bòswell that Johnson appealed not only to the President but to Barry who was on the Council that year. The minutes of the Council record that "A letter was read from Dr. Johnson. Resolved. That Mr. Lowe's picture of the Deluge be placed in the Antique Academy." Here *The Deluge* was shown by itself, among the casts, and its reception appears to have justified the original opinion of the Academy Council; although Lowe's friend says that it failed to succeed only because "after Johnson had shamed them into showing it, it was put into the Plaster Academy where few visitors went and where the picture, which should have been seen at a distance, could only be examined as closely as a miniature." He says, further, that the picture was badly treated because the President and Sir William Chambers were the enemies of its painter, a statement that is disproved so far as the first-named is concerned by a reference to the Council minutes which show that Lowe was given six guineas from the charitable funds of the Academy in 1782, 1783 and 1784, in each case on the personal recommendation of the President.

As to the merits of *The Deluge* it is true that Johnson said to Lowe, "Sir, your picture is noble and probable," but it should be remembered that Johnson was purblind and that his ignorance of the arts was profound. Northcote says its execution was "execrable beyond belief"; and even the critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, who admits that he wishes to speak as favourably as he can of the picture, can only say "if it has failed, as we fear it has, it fails with that respect attending great endeavours."

Lowe's ill-starred masterpiece appears to have found an admirer, and presumably a purchaser, for *The Deluge*, many years after it was exhibited at the Academy, was hanging at Sutton Place, Guildford, then the property of Mr. John Webbe Weston. A visitor to Sutton Place in 1834, says of it:—"A most extravagant, extraordinary and ill-drawn picture occupies the eastern end of the splendid old hall, and the bathos of the design is completed by the inscription, on a broad gold tablet at the base of the frame." Probably the tablet was placed on the frame by Lowe before it went to the Academy, for the meaning of the

picture would have been obscure without the explanatory description, which ran as follows:—

“In the Deluge, the most powerful of the human race and the strongest of the animal creation, may be supposed to be perishing last on the mountain; likely thus to be rescued from the wreck of the universe is a beautiful little female. In this picture, therefore, while the solitary summit of the last mountain remains uncovered by the water, one of the gigantic antediluvian princes gains his last refuge with his little daughter, and a hungry lion who had swum thither for shelter, springing on the maiden, the father, conscious of his own strength and superiority, expresses indignation rather than contempt.”

The writer in the *Morning Chronicle* who wished to speak well of Lowe, said that they had been fellow-students at Rome “and since that time, fortune, we fear, has never failed to use him hardly.” And at war with fortune the painter of *The Deluge* remained until his death in 1793. His widow by the following year had become so poor that she was a candidate—and an unsuccessful candidate—for the post then vacant of housekeeper to the Royal Academy, at a salary of ten pounds a year. Stranger, and perhaps sadder, is the fact that the widow of William Tomkins, A.R.A., once an admired landscape painter, was also an unsuccessful candidate for the same humble position. There were no pensions in those days for the widows of Academicians and Associates.

Fanny Burney, who tells us how Dr. Johnson canvassed successfully for commissions for Lowe, suggests that the increase of Romney’s connection was also due to the influence of a writer, his friend Richard Cumberland. “The other evening,” she says, “the conversation fell upon Romney the painter, who has lately got into great business and was first recommended and patronized by Mr. Cumberland. ‘See, Madam,’ said Dr. Johnson, laughing, ‘what it is to have the favour of a literary man.’” This was said in 1778, but at that time Cumberland, beyond writing the ode printed in the *Public Advertiser* in 1770, does not seem to have used his pen much to further the interests of Romney, whose name was rarely mentioned in any of the public journals until 1783, when his practice had become large and his reputation was assured.

Romney’s shy and retiring disposition (coupled of course

with the fact that he refrained from exhibiting after 1772) may be responsible to some extent for the almost total journalistic neglect of his work until 1783; but this neglect is in any case difficult to understand, for Romney was a fashionable painter long before this date and presumably his gallery or show-room of portraits was open to the casual visitor in common with those of Reynolds and Gainsborough. Even in 1783 the attention drawn to Romney's work seems to depend less upon its excellence or reputation than upon the fact that the popular idol of the day, Mrs. Siddons, was numbered among his sitters. That Robert Edge Pine was painting the actress was announced in the papers early in January, 1783, and on the 23rd of the month the *Morning Chronicle* states:—"Romney as well as Pine is to paint Mrs. Siddons; the first a private portrait, the second, as we have said, in the Grecian Daughter." Mrs. Siddons sat to Romney in February, and a critic who saw the portrait in Cavendish Square in the middle of March describes it as a whole length with which little progress had been made so far. Later in the month there is a rumour that two or three weeks will witness the completion of the portrait, but in April it is admitted that "it goes on but slowly, so that the incredulous think that the event will be the same with Mrs. Siddons's picture as with Henderson's, which was begun but never finished. Romney also, if he ever finishes, will, when finished, with his usual magnificence disdain to exhibit."

The Cavendish Square painter had at this time no lack of portraits in his studio, for those mentioned as in progress or just completed included besides that of Mrs. Siddons, whole lengths of the Duchess of Rutland, Lady Beauchamp, Mrs. Mills, Lady Bell Hamilton and Lord Derby; "and two heads that indeed could not easily be missed—Sir Richard Jebb and Mr. Gibbon, Romney has hit off very successfully." None of these portraits, however, would the painter send to the Academy, or to the gallery of the Incorporated Society of Artists, of which he was still a member; and the *Public Advertiser* after expatiating on the absence of works from George Barret, the two Sandbys, Wright of Derby, Nathaniel Dance and William Peters, lectures Romney severely for his remissness:—

"Romney, as of late he has always affected to be, is also absent from his duty. This is either monstrous affectation, absurd perverseness, or erroneous timidity. For why should

he either fear or flout at joining the exhibitors? In his acknowledged height of excellence he cannot think his talents too humble thus to dare the scrutiny of the public. And on the other hand, high as he is he cannot be above the practice while it continues—as we hope it will long continue—the practice of his betters.”

While Mrs. Siddons was giving her first sittings to Pine in January, 1783, a portrait of her was published in the *Westminster Magazine*, described as an engraving “from a crayon painting in her own possession.” It is a bust portrait, showing her wearing a large black hat, with curls falling on her shoulders, and its arrangement resembles slightly that of Gainsborough’s famous work now in the National Gallery. Published when the actress was in the first flush of her success in London the portrait attracted considerable attention and as it was unsigned there was some curiosity as to its authorship. In the *Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits* it is described as anonymous, but the following note from the *Morning Chronicle* of February 7th, 1783, shows that it was by Lawrence, who although only fourteen had already made a reputation at Bath by his pastel portraits. The note was, no doubt, inspired, if not actually written, by Lawrence’s father, of whose attempts to assist his son by means of advertisements I shall have more to say in a later chapter:—

“The drawing of Mrs. Siddons, from whence the small print published in the *Westminster Magazine* for last month was taken, was executed in one sitting in a short space of time, by Master Lawrence at Bath, which that Lady accepted as a present; and though in her riding dress and hastily executed is deemed the strongest likeness of her hitherto published. But he has drawn her in the Grecian Daughter, and in another of her best characters, which is Zara in the Mourning Bride, both publishing by subscription. The engravings by Sherwin that embellish the works of Bishop Wilson were executed from drawings by Master Lawrence at the age of eleven years. But the work which astonishes the eye of every beholder is his picture of the Transfiguration, from the immortal Raphael, which it is believed will shortly be removed to this city at the instance of many of the Nobility and Gentry who have seen it that are lately arrived from Bath.”

Lawrence’s pastel copy of the Transfiguration, made from a copy, was brought to London in the ensuing spring and exhibited

for some weeks at a jeweller's in the Haymarket, opposite the Opera House.

Except miniatures and a drawing there were no portraits of Mrs. Siddons at the Academy in 1783, but two or three were shown at the exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists by Thomas Beach, of Bath, one of the earliest pupils of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Beach, at this time Vice-President of the Incorporated Artists and striving to revive their failing fortunes, contributed many portraits to its exhibition; and those of the actress who had just become famous were a full length in which Mrs. Siddons was represented as *A Lady in the Character of Melancholy, from Milton's Il Penseroso*, and a smaller study in which she was seen in ordinary dress:—"not altogether what she appears to be upon the stage, but rather *en déshabille*."

The *Morning Chronicle* mentions among Beach's portraits one of Mrs. Siddons as Calista in *The Fair Penitent*, but this may have been a mistake of the critic as there is no reference to it in any other journal. The portraits shown by Beach also included those of himself; Tenducci the singer; Rauzzini the Bath musician; William Woodfall (the pioneer of Parliamentary reporting), probably the one now in the National Portrait Gallery; the Countess of Westmorland; and John Taylor, the "gentleman-artist" of Bath, admired by Smollett and Garrick.

These portraits were painted at Bath, and no doubt were seen at Beach's studio by the former master of the artist when he visited the city in search of health not long before the opening of the exhibition of the Incorporated Artists. Sir Joshua, who according to the newspapers had been "struck with a fit of the palsy," recovered quickly under the influence of Bath air and the Bath waters. He soon returned to London where he read one of his addresses at the Academy before a large assemblage of his friends and admirers who were pleased to find that he was capable "with unabating spirits, of going through a discourse that took up near fifty minutes in the delivery." I do not know whether Walpole was among the audience, but he soon afterwards received from Sir Joshua a printed copy of his Discourse (the Eleventh), on a page of which he has written some ill-natured comments on the President's pictures. Sir Joshua's argument was based on an assertion that genius "consists principally in the comprehension of a whole; in taking general ideas only," and Walpole wrote in his presentation copy:—

"This Discourse is a tacit account of his own object in painting, which was *general effect*, but ought not to be a general rule; for he neglected the other parts. His flesh does not, like Titian's, represent the various tints of flesh; nor his draperies, like Vandyke's, represent velvet, satin, silk or cloth. His hands are generally as ill drawn as coloured, his pictures that were most striking the first year were commonly faded in the next."

Walpole was not impressed by the work shown by Reynolds at the succeeding Academy of 1783 (he dismissed the exhibition collectively as "indifferent") and wrote in his catalogue against the title of the portrait group of the Brummell children, "poor Sir Joshua seems to decline since his illness."

But other critics disagreed with Walpole on this point, particularly a writer in the *Morning Herald* who called at Sir Joshua's house in Leicester Square not long before the pictures were sent to the Academy and found the painter in high spirits and much pleased with one of the works intended for the exhibition.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds," says his visitor, "has lately painted a head of Albany Wallis, Esq., for Mr. Troward, the partner of that gentleman, which this celebrated artist deems his *chef d'œuvre*. It is certainly one of the finest portraits that ever came from the pencil of ancient or modern master and we are happy to find that it was painted since Sir Joshua's late alarming indisposition, as in our opinion it discovers everything the reverse of an impaired genius."

Albany Wallis was the man who at a crisis in the career of James Christie helped him to the relief that perhaps saved his business from destruction. At a time when the auctioneer had suffered heavy losses and was encompassed with financial troubles, Wallis offered to take him to see Garrick at Hampton. They went accordingly, and Wallis, while walking in the garden before dinner, managed privately to acquaint his host with Christie's situation. Garrick listened to the story, and early in the evening found an excuse to call Christie away to another room. "What is this story that I hear from Mr. Wallis?" said Garrick. "If five thousand pounds will extricate you out of your difficulty come here with Wallis any day you please and you shall have the money."

Opie, though still spoken of in the newspapers as "The Cornish Wonder," failed to repeat in 1783 the sensational success

of the preceding year, and his popularity at the exhibition was challenged by another young man of promise for whom his friends prognosticated a distinguished future. This was John Hoppner, who a few months earlier had carried off the gold medal for historical painting at the Royal Academy schools, though not without an official reproof for carelessness, which was conveyed to him by the President. "The Royal Academicians," said Sir Joshua, "are of opinion that though there is that superiority in your picture which entitles you to the Premium, they at the same time think you have not exerted yourself to the utmost and bestowed as much time upon the picture as it required completely to finish it. You are therefore desired before it is presented to his Majesty to finish it in a proper manner." Hoppner's portrait of Lord Lewisham at the Academy of 1783 was much admired by some of the critics, but the highest praise was reserved for his *Portrait of a Young Gentleman* (96) which moved a writer in the *Morning Chronicle* to utter a prophecy that is worth quoting to-day. "Of this young artist," he says, "who in the portrait now before us promises to be much more than a painter of ordinary rank, the mention to be appropriate should contain commendation much more than ordinary also. That he has genius, evidently appears to us: if he has at the same time application the great possibilities of the art will be within his reach. He cannot fail to be a great painter."

Gainsborough, however, was the principal attraction this year at the Academy, where he was represented by no fewer than twenty-seven canvases, an enormous number when it is considered that the exhibition was only one-third the size of those of the present time. Fifteen of these canvases were portraits of members of the Royal Family, and among them was a study of the little four-year-old Prince Octavius, which, as a spectator records, "blooming in the natural health of Gainsborough's pencil, seemed to say, 'I yet live! Look at me!'" Prince Octavius died on the 3rd of May a week after the opening of the Academy, and the sight of his portrait reduced the Queen and the Princesses to tears when they visited the Exhibition in June.

The most popular portraits contributed by Gainsborough represented three of the beauties of the time, Lady Horatia Waldegrave, Mrs. Sheridan and the Duchess of Devonshire. Lady Horatia's portrait was hung on the chimney-board of the large room, a position that the painter and his friends regarded

THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE

as degrading, and one in which it could not be properly seen; but the full lengths of Mrs. Sheridan and the Duchess were well placed, and each was a centre of attraction. The portrait of Mrs. Sheridan has long been lost sight of and contemporary criticisms give us no idea of its arrangement or scheme of colour, except that the *Morning Post* describes it as "painted in the same style as the Duchess of Devonshire." The portrait of the Duchess exhibited in 1783 is, I believe, the full length once at Althorp. It does not suggest such a degree of good looks as would justify the widespread belief that the Duchess was the most beautiful woman of her time; nor is this idea conveyed by the better-known portrait by Reynolds—the one in which she is shown playing with her infant daughter. Other evidence indicates that the so-called "beautiful Duchess of Devonshire" owed her extraordinary reputation not to symmetry of features but to expression and vivacity, coupled with an air of radiant good temper and good nature that made her the idol of the public.

Her mother, Countess Spencer, certainly did not think her beautiful. Writing from Spa to Viscount Nuneham (afterwards Earl Harcourt) in September, 1773, a few months before the marriage of her daughter to the Duke of Devonshire, the Countess tells him of the approaching return of her family to England and assures him that he will be surprised to find Georgiana so grown and improved:—

"For she is, without being handsome or having a single good feature in her face, one of the most showy girls I ever saw; and still retains, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of a French dancing master, that natural simplicity and, if I may be allowed the expression, that graceful kind of awkwardness which I begin to think belongs to her figure."

Among the papers preserved at Nuneham is a curiously interesting description of the Duchess in her youth, written by Elizabeth, Countess Harcourt, and this too suggests that she was more charming than beautiful. The Countess says of her:—

"At the time of her marriage with William, Duke of Devonshire, in the year 1774, she was just seventeen and might have sat for the portrait of a Hebe. Youth, health, cheerfulness and good humour gave a glow and animation to her countenance that well supplied the want of regular features; her complexion was brilliant, her hair beautiful, her teeth remarkably

fine and her smile fascinating. Her person was tall and showy but her limbs were not finely formed, and her deportment was neither dignified nor graceful, except when dancing. In that accomplishment she as far surpassed all the women of her time as the Prince of Wales did all the men of his.

"When she first entered into a world of which she soon became the idol a great degree of natural timidity and unfeigned modesty gave an awkwardness to her manner that might have been excused in favour of the amiable qualities from whence it proceeded; but which was declared to be becoming because it was the law to admire whatever the Duchess of Devonshire did or said. This ill-judged flattery induced her to continue from vanity what originated in humility, and strange as it may seem, the slaves of fashion, rather than not resemble her in something, would gnaw their fans and imitate tricks for which a boarding school girl would have been reproved, stick out their chins and affect to be short-breathed.

"I have ever thought, and still think, that nature never formed a more charming creature. She had sense, she had information, she had talents; few women ever wrote as well both in prose and verse, and few could converse more agreeably."

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, whose name in the public mind is inseparably connected with the art of Gainsborough, sat to him for several portraits, but the full length of 1783 is the only one which was exhibited at the Academy. She sat also to Reynolds, as well as to Romney, Hoppner, Downman, and a host of other artists, and sketches of her are to be found in numberless prints and caricatures of the time. Many of these are connected with the famous Westminster election of April, 1784, at which, largely owing to the influence and wealth of the Duchess, her friend Charles James Fox was returned by a small majority. At the time of the election both the Duchess and Fox were sitting for portraits to Sir Joshua, who, according to a contemporary account, was made use of by the Fox party (which included the Prince of Wales) and then thrown aside; and it has been asserted that this incident was connected with the quarrel between Gainsborough and the Royal Academy which occurred in the same month.

However this may have been, it is certain that the Duchess played a prominent part in the election, to the deep regret of her

best friends. Countess Harcourt says that during the contest between Fox and the Ministerial candidates:—

“... the Duchess of Devonshire was seen in every dirty alley soliciting and purchasing votes from chimney sweepers and butchers. It was in vain that every printshop was filled with caricatures and that the Press teemed with lampoons and satires; she was intoxicated with the praise bestowed upon her by her selfish associates, and ascribed to envy the honest indignation which the more thinking part of the community could not but feel when they witnessed conduct so disgraceful to her sex and rank. The sums she squandered on this occasion were enormous; nor did the folly end with the election. She would have ceased to be the head of the party if her purse had ceased to support it.”

Among the feminine canvassers on the other side was another Duchess, her Grace of Bedford, energetic but elderly, whose faded charms obtained for her an uncomplimentary nickname. Miss Margaret Jeffreys, writing from London to Lord Hardwicke while the election was in progress, says:—“The Duchess of Bedford now goes about canvassing. They call her Duchess of Wrinkles, and Devonshire, Duchess of Dimples—rather good, I think.”

Countess Harcourt's statements concerning the lavish expenditure by the Duchess of Devonshire are corroborated by the journals of the time. It was estimated by some of the newspaper correspondents who watched the election that she spent about six hundred pounds a day, and that much of the money was wasted. In a note in the *Public Advertiser* headed “Hints on the canvassing Duchesses and Countesses,” it is said:—

“When these ladies may again give, as it can be proved they have given, five guineas for a bundle of broccoli, eight guineas for a leg of mutton, etc., the tradesman may certainly take the money with a safe conscience if he votes on the other side; and this has been done already in three instances in Westminster.”

An example of the failure of the Duchess as a canvasser is cited in the case of a greengrocer near Mount Street from whom she bought some oranges and directed that they should be placed in her carriage. She praised the oranges, and slipping five guineas into the hand of the greengrocer, whispered significantly that she had paid for them and hoped that he would see his way

to giving a plumper for Mr. Fox. "The man paused, stared, examined the cash, and then putting it quietly into his pocket protested that he was infinitely sorry he could not oblige her Grace as he had polled for Lord Hood and Sir Cecil Wray half an hour earlier."

Circumstantial stories were told in the newspapers of the barter of caresses for votes, and the fair canvasser was reminded in brutal fashion that the favours she granted were sometimes as unprofitably bestowed as the five guineas on the greengrocer. "The Duchess," said the *Morning Post*, "meets with the fate of other ladies who perambulate the town and have a number of admirers. She is frequently bilked and grants her kisses without any retribution." A contemporary writer of verses, regretful though severe, laments that a woman possessed of such charms and mental gifts:—

". . . urged by faction midst the rabble tribe,
Should kiss a greasy butcher with a bribe,"

and adds in a footnote, "It was certainly an ingenious device to heighten the value of a guinea, to place it between the ruby lips of a lady of high fashion, and thus let it drop in the act of kissing into the liquorish mouth of the chuckling voter. The gentlemen of Newport Market like it hugely and would not have been without such a kiss for twenty guineas."

Sir Joshua's portrait of the Duchess—a head and bust—had been described as "nearly finished" in January, but it did not accompany the whole length of Fox to the Academy in April, although the painter must have been well aware that its interest at this time would have been exceptional; and although too he was seeking for pictures in every direction to compensate for the secession of Gainsborough. Perhaps the Duke of Devonshire forbade its exhibition, roused from his lethargy at last by the scandal of his wife's electioneering tactics and by the mocking paragraphs which described him as sitting at home in the nursery rocking the cradle while the Duchess was kissing butchers and "drinking daily since the poll commenced, two pots of purl, a pint of Geneva and a gallon of porter in the different visits she pays to her elegant acquaintance in Westminster."

Gainsborough's quarrel with the Royal Academy in 1784 was caused by the refusal of the Hanging Committee to place his portrait group of the Princess Royal, Princess Augusta and

GAINSBOROUGH'S QUARREL WITH THE ACADEMY

Princess Elizabeth in a more favourable situation than that which was ordinarily assigned to whole lengths at Somerset House. Strictly speaking, Gainsborough was wrong in claiming a privilege that could not be permitted to all, but the general feeling of the public seems to have been that he was hardly treated by his fellow-Academicians and that his petition should have been granted in view of the distinction of his sitters and the fact that his picture had been painted by command to hang in a special position at the Palace. He withdrew all his canvases, to the deep regret of the admirers of his portraits and landscapes.

"And you, Gainsborough," wrote "Candid" in the *Morning Chronicle*, the day after the opening of the exhibition, "whose pencil used to fill our minds with the remembrance of pleasing things, why do we not find you by the seashore or in the woods? Alas! you fell into the hands of men who felt only their own power and were insensible to true merit. They forgot that they were employed to cater for the public. Puffed up with the idea of the important theatre they were for once permitted to shift the scenes in, they imagined themselves the real heroes of the drama in which they only performed a part." Gainsborough never contributed again to the Academy, but later in the year he opened, at his house in Pall Mall, a private exhibition of his pictures of which a full description is given in my life of the artist. The portraits of the three Princesses were among the works shown.

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